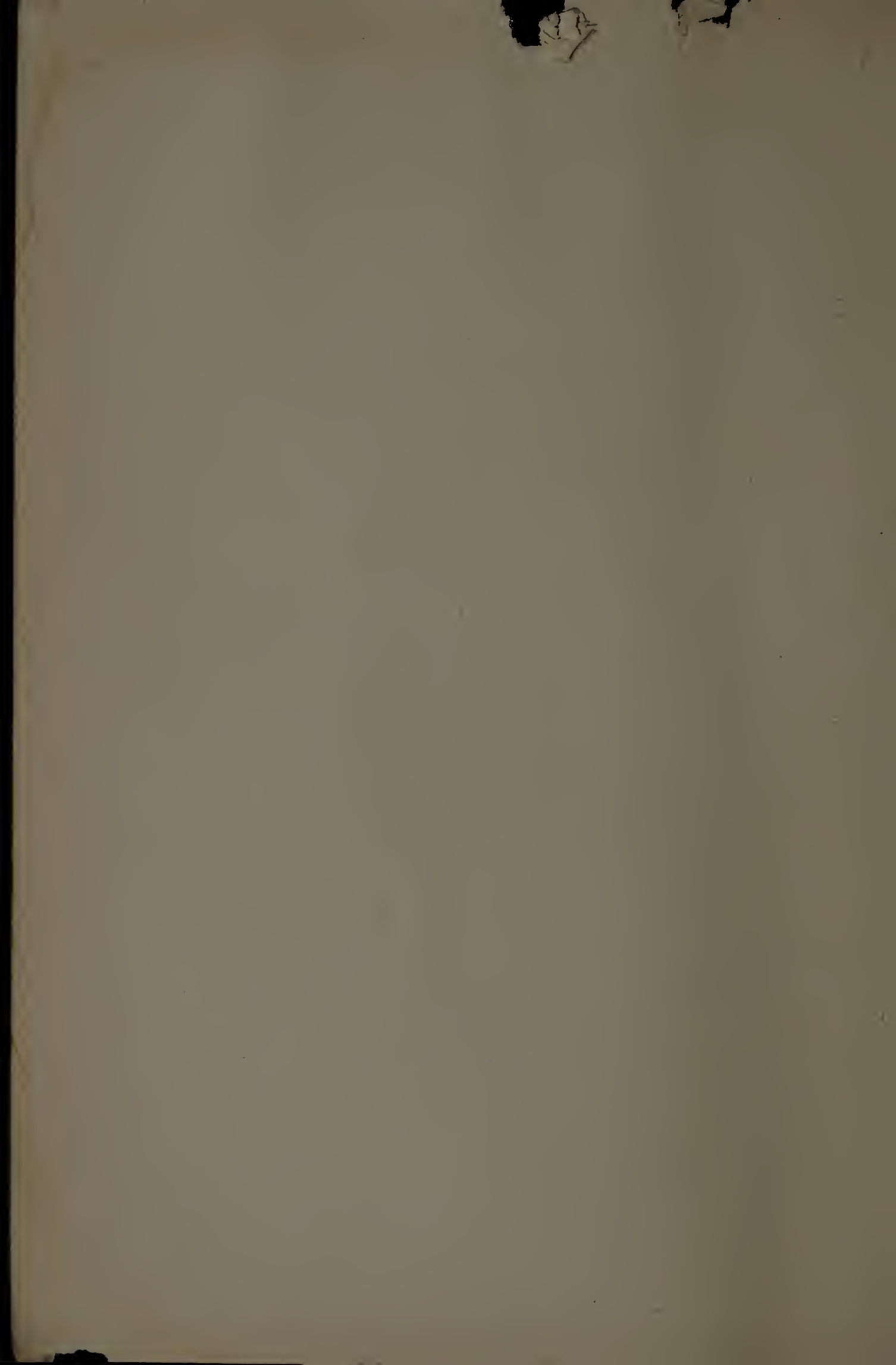


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“Each fellow came up alone and asked the most ridiculous, and, in some cases, impertinent questions.”

(See page 31)

Reuben Green's Adventures at Yale

BY

JAMES OTIS

AUTHOR OF

"Chased Through Norway," "An Unprovoked Mutiny,"
"Inland Waterways," etc.



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Reuben Green's Adventures at Yale

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REUBEN GREEN'S ADVENTURES AT YALE.

CHAPTER I.

REUBEN GREEN, FROM MAINE.

When Reuben Green, aged eighteen, left the little village of Aurora, in the State of Maine, bound for New Haven, he fancied his arrival would create a great deal of excitement.

In his native village every man, woman and child knew that "Rube Green was going to Yale;" but whether he would decide to become a clergyman or a lawyer no one, not even himself, was able to say with any degree of certainty.

It was the great excitement attending his departure that caused him to believe he would be an object of similar curiosity and interest in the collegiate town.

Therefore, when, after a long and tedious ride, he stepped from the cars to the platform, and could not observe the slightest change in the appearance of those around him, he felt very much disappointed.

The first thought was that this apathy arose from the fact that he was not known, and he walked proudly, with

a look-at-me-please air, to the collection of baggage which was piled up in seeming confusion, selecting an old-fashioned, brass-nailed trunk with the name "R. Green" painted upon it.

This he dragged across the platform with considerable noise; but succeeded in attracting no attention, save from the hackman who had been soliciting his patronage.

When this had been done, and the inhabitants of New Haven took no notice of the fact that they had a distinguished stranger among them, he approached the driver of one of the carriages and said, in a tone loud enough to be heard by all standing around:

"If you please, I would like to go to Yale College. How much do you charge for carrying me there?"

"By Jove, Roy! Here's fair game for us. Another freshman, who looks as if he might have come from the place where they pry the sun up with a crowbar mornings," Billy Moore said to his companion, Roy Moody, and the two juniors walked quickly toward the newcomer.

"Are you a collegian, sir?" Billy asked, in his blandest tone.

"What's that?" Reuben said, in perplexity.

"I heard you say something about Yale, and thought you might be a collegian."

"Oh, you mean am I going to school there?"

"Exactly," Billy replied, as he tried to suppress a smile, while Roy turned round abruptly to give vent to his mirth. "Perhaps you have not been informed; but it isn't quite the thing for a fellow to ride in a hired carriage."

"But I have my trunk, and can't walk," Reuben said, mournfully.

"Of course not; that would be a grave infraction of the rules. Students never walk, except upon the written advice of the regular physician."

"But what am I to do?" and Reuben looked around in bewilderment.

"Stay here until the college carriage is sent for you. I suppose you notified the dean of your coming on this train?"

"Why, no, I didn't think that would be necessary."

"Then you have treated him very rudely, and if you take my advice you will write him an apology at once. Tell him you are waiting at the depot until he sends a carriage. Don't you think it would be the proper course, Roy?"

"I don't see there is anything else he can do, unless he's willing to enter in disgrace, which would be bad for a freshman like him."

"I may come from down East; but I want you to understand I am not as fresh as I might be," Reuben said, with a show of anger.

It was some moments before the juniors could make him understand that the term "freshman" is applied to all students during the first year, and then he was covered with confusion.

He made the most ample apology, and, as a peace offering, insisted on presenting them with some apples.

"I brought them all the way from Aurora, for you know

a fellow wants something to eat at recess time, and you can put them in your pockets till then."

Billy and Roy were "sober as judges," while receiving the fruit, and the former said, gravely:

"You can hire the driver of this carriage to take your note of apology to the dean, and then, unless he is very angry, the college turnout will be sent."

"How shall I write it here?"

"The young gentleman in the ticket-office is employed by the professors to provide the students with all necessary writing materials. Tell him who you are, where you come from, and where you are going. That will be enough, and everything will be supplied."

While Billy was making these explanations, Roy had taken the driver aside and whispered:

"Take the letter, if he gives you one; charge him a dollar, and bring the thing to us at the hotel. I'll see that you don't get into trouble."

"It's all very well to say," the driver replied, with a grin; "but it's many the fuss I've been in on account of you and Mr. Moore."

"But you were always paid well, and cash atones for a multitude of sins."

"Right you are, Mr. Moody. I'll fix it in great shape."

"Come on, Roy," Billy called, impatiently. "Greeny has gone to demand writing materials from the ticket agent, and the fun will be too good to lose."

The two hurried away, to stand as near the open door as they could without danger of being seen by their victim, when they heard the following spicy conversation:

"My name is Green, Reuben Green," the freshman began, as the agent stood waiting to serve him. "I have just come from Aurora, that's below Bangor, you know, in Maine."

"I don't care where you came from," the gentleman said, impatiently. "What do you want?"

"I was going to say I am a freshman."

"And you look uncommonly like one, I assure you. Now, if this is any lark, such as you young gentlemen are so fond of, I want it understood that I am not in the humor for anything of the kind."

"I don't know anything about larks, except one I saw in Norcross' store, and I can't say I think much of them as birds, although I'm told they sing wonderfully," Reuben replied, gravely. "What I wanted to say was that I am one of the scholars in Yale College, and I came here never thinking the dean should be notified. Now, I'll be very much obliged if you will give me a sheet of writing paper and an envelope."

The agent looked at the speaker to assure himself the request was made in good faith, and turned away without a word.

Reuben gazed at him a moment in surprise, and then repeated his last words again.

"Will you go away and leave me alone?" the agent asked, angrily, and in order to avoid further interruption, pulled the window down with a crash.

This was sufficient to arouse Reuben's ire. He had been told what his rights were, and proposed to have them then and there, for, as the son of the richest man

in Aurora, he believed himself entitled to more courtesy than ordinary people.

"I want you to understand that you can't impose on me," he cried, angrily. "You shall lose your position before I'm a day older."

By this time Billy and Roy thought it best to interfere.

"What is the matter?" the former asked, gravely, as he entered the station.

"Why, this man refuses to give me what I want, although I told him I was going to Yale."

"Well, I wouldn't say anything about it now; he has a bad liver, and whenever the medical students take it away to be cleaned he is apt to be crusty. Better tell the dean when you see him, and I warrant this fellow will be sorry for what he has done."

"Take his liver away!" Reuben repeated.

"Certainly, that is a very common thing down here, although I ought not to have told you about it, for the matter is to be kept a secret until the process can be patented. Write your apology; the driver is waiting to take it, and you will be obliged to pay him for his time."

"But how can I do it without paper?"

"Use one of these telegraph blanks. It isn't exactly the proper thing; but it will be understood under the circumstances."

It was necessary for Reuben to wait several moments before he could control his temper sufficiently to pen what he intended should be a model letter, and then, with both Billy and Roy looking over his shoulder, he wrote such

a missive as nearly caused his newly-made friends to explode with suppressed mirth.

“Now, what shall I do with it?” he asked, after reading it with considerable pride.

“Hire the hack-driver to deliver it at once.”

“Why wouldn't it be as well for me to go with him, and save the trouble of sending after me?”

“My dear Green, it would be the worst kind of form, and I beg you won't think of doing anything of the kind. If you were a mere nobody the case would be different; but as it is, I am sure the other students would be very much disappointed if you failed to do exactly as I propose. You will receive a great deal attention from them, for you are no ordinary freshman, that may be seen at a glance, and we must make the most of you while we can.”

“Oh, I am perfectly willing to take your advice!” Reuben replied, quickly. “I will speak to the driver at once. Then what had I better do?”

“Sit right on your trunk and wait. By that means the college coachman will recognize you without difficulty.”

“Are you going to stay here?”

“Bless you, no! The physician directed that we remain out of doors only one hour, and we barely have time to get back. We shall see you again this evening.”

“I hope so,” Reuben replied; and then, as the two walked up the platform, he gave his order to the driver, thinking at the same moment that one dollar was a good deal of money to spend for such service.

After this had been done, he seated himself on his

trunk, in the most conspicuous position possible, to wait for the college carriage.

During the next hour he was considerably surprised to see so many young gentlemen loitering around the station.

They came in squads, and each one seemed to think it his solemn duty to walk past the freshman from Aurora; but Reuben was considerably puzzled to know what they saw to cause so much amusement.

All were smiling, or laughing outright, when they came near him, and, although he looked around carefully, there was nothing met his gaze which should call up so much as the ghost of a smile.

CHAPTER II.

MEETING FRIENDS.

The freshman, one might say the very freshman, remained seated on his trunk during the two hours which followed, and it is certain no person in or about the station attracted more attention than did he.

The trunk, with the brass-headed nails, was pulled to the very edge of the platform, with the end projecting, in order that the driver of the "college carriage" might see the name without difficulty, and, seated upon it, trying to preserve a dignified air, was the young gentleman from Aurora.

It seemed just a trifle odd to him that he was kept waiting so long; but he was beginning to understand there was a deal of ceremony at a college, and attributed the delay to something of the kind.

At the close of the long two hours the students disappeared from the station, and then Reuben saw a procession coming down the street, headed by his newly-made friends.

"They're going to give me a regular reception," he said to himself, with a feeling of pride. "If all the fellows are as agreeable as the two who told me about the carriage, I shall have a jolly time here."

The procession was really arranged in his honor, as

he learned a few moments later. It was composed of not less than fifty students, and they drew up in front of him with true military precision.

Billy Moore, advancing two paces, wheeled sharply around, and, facing his companions, cried:

“Make ready, gentlemen, to salute Mr. R. U. Green, whose name speaks for himself. He has honored us by coming all the way from the village of Aurora—at some future time he will explain where that settlement is located—and it is for us to receive him with due ceremony. Hats off, gentlemen! Salute!”

The entire party bowed very profoundly, and once more Billy gave his commands:

“Hats on! Stand at ease until I, the bearer of the dean’s apology, acquaint Mr. R. U. Green with the cause for the long delay in the reception ceremonies!”

During this performance Reuben had risen to his feet, hat in hand, and, as Billy came forward, he said, in a hoarse whisper:

“You have made a mistake in my name, sir. It is Reuben—plain Reuben; I have no middle name.”

“I beg your pardon, Plain Reuben; but you must remember that when you enter Yale it is necessary to have a class name, and we had decided it should be Ulysses, because of your strong resemblance to that son of Laertes and Anticleia; but since you qualify it by the adjective, we accept the correction. Gentlemen,” he added, turning to his companions, “this is not R. U. Green as I stated; but Plain Reuben. Salute Plain Reuben!”

Again they all bowed profoundly, while the loungers at the station gathered around to see the sport.

Reuben was forced to return it, which he did with a queer little twist of the foot, as if on the point of beginning a jig, and then whispered to the master of ceremonies:

"I didn't mean that 'Plain' was a part of my name; I only wanted to say it was plain Reuben."

"Exactly, my dear sir, that is as I pronounced it. Now, Mr. Plain Reuben, allow me to offer the dean's most humble apologies for not sending the college coach according to custom, when we have any rare freshmen among us. He wishes me to tell you that one of the pole horses has been suddenly afflicted with ticdouloureux, and both the leaders have developed symptoms of metacarpus on the lumbar vertebræ. Under these distressing circumstances he asks if you will kindly consider an escort by the flower of the college as sufficient honor?"

"You are very kind," Reuben stammered, not understanding more than half of what Billy had said. "I shall be only too glad to do as you wish."

"Our wishes are yours, Plain Reuben; but allow me to suggest that we march to the campus, where you will be received in due form by the entire faculty.

"What is the campus?" Reuben whispered.

"A place where the professors camp out on the thirteenth and twenty-first of every month in accordance with the old Greek custom. You remember those beautiful words written by Hic Jacet?"

"Oh, yes!" the freshman replied, hesitatingly, and

straightway he began to wonder whether the party spoken of was one of the teachers at this college.

"Then you are ready to accompany us?" Billy asked, in a pleading tone, as if afraid the request would not be complied with.

"I'll do whatever you say is right."

"In that case we shall enjoy ourselves very much before the dean tucks us in our little beds."

"Does he really do that?"

"Certainly. Have you forgotten the latter portion of Hic Jacet's poem?"

"Of course not; I think I remember a little about it," and just then nearly the whole escorting party saw something on the opposite side of the way, which caused them to turn their heads in that direction.

"Being such a very freshman," Billy continued, gravely, "it may be the dean will forget to attend to you, and if he does you must notify him at once of the omission."

"I will, I will," Reuben replied, emphatically, and again the young gentlemen found it necessary to turn their heads.

"Now, if you'll come down, we will do the honors," Billy continued, as he raised his hat.

"But what about my trunk?"

"That shall be attended to without delay. We have Barnum's old elephant trainer to look out for such things, and he is an expert."

Reuben leaped from the platform to the ground, and

the students closed up, leaving him in the center of a hollow square.

“Forward march!” the leader cried, and as the procession started, Billy and Roy stationed themselves at the freshman’s side.

“It is against the laws of the town for any of the tradespeople to bow to a freshman until after a proper introduction; but it gives a fellow considerable tone, if he shows that he is willing to condescend to salute every one as he passes.”

“In what way?”

“Take your hat off, and whenever you see any one looking at you, bow politely.”

“Do you all do the same?” Reuben asked, in surprise.

“No, it is only customary for the freshmen to do so the first time they come here. You won’t be called upon for anything of the kind again.”

As a matter of course, the people on the streets looked at the procession curiously, and, prompted by his adviser, Reuben began to bow right and left as if he was some distinguished visitor receiving an ovation.

It was comical in the extreme, and, try as they might, his escort could not keep their countenances straight. More than one covered his face with his handkerchief, and from the shaking of their bodies a stranger would have said they were stricken with grief.

“You are doing it great,” Billy whispered. “If you continue in this manner, I’ll warrant you’ll be the best-known freshman in town.”

This praise incited Reuben to redouble his efforts, and

he bowed yet lower, until even Roy and Billy were forced to indulge in smothered laughter.

Not content with exhibiting the young gentleman from Aurora during such time as it would be necessary to walk directly to the college grounds, the escort conducted him through the principal streets of the city, and when the victim was thoroughly tired from the long journey, he was allowed to enter the building in which Roy and Billy had their chambers.

Here he was taken to the latter's room, where were seated in great state three young men, who were introduced as the representatives of the faculty, waiting to examine the freshman with a view to learning whether he was worthy of admission to the college.

"But father has paid for my schooling," Reuben said to Billy, "so I can't understand how they can keep me out, no matter how little I know."

"It is the custom, my dear sir, and you had better conform to it, or there may be trouble."

"Let them go ahead, then, and we'll see whether I don't know enough to come here. Down East there wasn't a spelling-school within a dozen miles where I couldn't hold my end up with the best of them."

"That's the way to talk, Plain Reuben; but you must answer their questions, just the same."

The "examiners" first asked the newcomer's name, age, and place of residence, one of the three gravely pretending to write down every word.

"Can you explain the whyness of the thus, according to the precept laid down by Socrates, Mr. Plain Reuben?"

was the first question, and the victim looked around him in bewilderment.

“Take the second proposition from Icarus, and show why that which exists cannot be.”

Reuben’s eyes were opened to their fullest extent.

“Prove that the segment of a circle, if multiplied by the square root of its length, will equal twice its circumference.”

This was the “last straw that broke the camel’s back.” Reuben looked imploringly at Billy, who was standing like a statue by his side, and then at Roy.

Both appeared to be very much interested in the problems, and neither so much as glanced at him.

“I didn’t learn them kind of things at school, and Parson Wright never told me they would be asked,” he said, piteously.

“Is it true you have been preparing for this examination, and have omitted the three fundamental questions upon which this seat of learning is founded?”

“I don’t know any answers to ’em, and that’s a fact. What is the ‘whyness of the thus,’ anyhow?”

“It is not for you to ask. We are here for that purpose. Mr. Moody, will you inquire of the dean if he cares to see Plain Reuben after he has failed so signally?”

Roy left the room hurriedly, returning a moment later, nearly out of breath, as if he had been running, and said:

“It is no use to trouble him now; he has some very important business on hand, making a microscopic investigation of the nebula of Venus; but perhaps it would be as well for Plain Reuben to call upon the dean’s clerk, if

he cares to make any explanation as to his failure in the examination."

Then the "examiners" put the query to the unhappy freshman, and he replied, mournfully:

"I s'pose I might as well go through the whole thing; but it don't seem to be of much use, for I can't even understand the questions."

"That is unfortunate for you, but relieves us of the disagreeable duty of finishing the examination. Mr. Moore, since the young gentleman appears to be your friend, will you conduct him to the dean's clerk? We have made a great mistake in allowing him an escort of honor."

Reuben, looking as if ready to burst into tears, was taken from the chamber, and the remainder of the party prepared to continue the sport.

CHAPTER III.

PLAIN REUBEN APOLOGIZES.

Plain Reuben was led up one flight of stairs and down another, the majority of the party following close behind, singing, in a low tone, the most mournful dirge, which had the effect of further increasing, if, indeed, that was possible, the disconsolate freshman's discomfiture.

Despite his grief and mortification, he could not but wonder at the size of the building through which he was being conducted.

As viewed from the outside, it did not appear any larger than an ordinary dormitory, and yet, so skillfully had his alleged friends led him that he failed to understand they had passed along the same hall twice or more.

It was a weary march; but finally came to an end on the ground floor, where a small parlor had been made ready for the reception of the victim.

Here the "dean's clerk," surrounded by several subordinates, was sitting in state, and he asked, sternly, as Billy Moore opened the door, cautiously:

"What is the meaning of this unseemly interruption? Why am I thus disturbed while casting the horoscope of a distinguished freshman from Aurora?"

This question, couched in such gracious words, gave Reuben a little hope, which was speedily dashed away, however, as Billy replied, with a great show of deference:

"I beg your pardon, doctor; but it is concerning that same distinguished freshman we have come."

"What is wanting, now? Has he not been received in due form?"

"He has, and the examiners have ordered that we bring him to you."

"For what reason?"

"He hasn't yet the first rudiments necessary for admittance to this temple of learning. He does not know even the whichness of the thus."

"What?" and the "clerk" sprang to his feet, as if both amazed and pained.

"It is true, doctor, and now his fate rests in your hands."

Billy bowed profoundly, stepped back a few paces, and, deftly placing his hands on the lower portion of Reuben's back, sent him spinning into the room like a tetotum.

"Be careful, sir, be careful; we do not tolerate anything in the way of mirth here," the clerk said, severely, as he motioned for the others to be seated, leaving the freshman standing directly in front of the desk.

"An' I don't feel a bit like it, either," Reuben said, mournfully. "One of the fellers pushed me."

"Who?" the doctor asked, sternly.

"One of them fellers."

"Mr. Plain Reuben, it is evident you are not only willfully ignorant, but lacking in good breeding. The collegians here are 'young gentlemen,' not 'fellers,' and I am forced to insist that you beg their pardon for having ap-

plied such an epithet, before I can even so much as consider your case."

Reuben looked around in dismay.

Every fellow was as solemn as an owl, and not a few of them had assumed angry expressions for the purpose of hastening the apologies.

"I'm sorry if I said anything out of the way," he began, in a tearful tone; "but I got so mixed up over in the other room I didn't hardly know what I was about."

"That will do, sir," the clerk interrupted. "If the young gentlemen are satisfied with the explanation they will signify it in the usual manner."

Instantly all rose to their feet, with left hands held high in the air, while with the right a rapid, circular movement was made, something after the fashion of a buzz saw.

Then the party resumed their seats, while Reuben was in a greater state of perplexity than before.

"Now, we will proceed to business," the clerk said, as he assumed an alleged judicial attitude. "Everything you say will be carefully and correctly noted down, Mr. Plain Reuben, so avoid any errors in your statements."

The assistants made a great flourish of pencils, and the examination was begun.

The unhappy freshman was forced to repeat his name, age, and place of birth. Then the most minute inquiries were made concerning his family, even to third and fourth cousins. He was required to tell how, when, and where he had studied, whether he had ever had the measles, or been in love.

In reply to the last question, he admitted that he had "waited upon" a young lady in his native village, and the clerk insisted on knowing all the particulars, such as the number of times he had taken her to church, if they had been out riding together, and how often he made a practice of calling.

Poor Reuben's face was crimson with blushes; but, believing this information was necessary in order to relieve him from the ignominy of being sent home in disgrace, he answered faithfully.

He was called upon to repeat the multiplication table; to spell the most ridiculous words his tormentor could think of, and finally requested to show his ability as an orator by "speaking a piece."

He chose as his subject "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck," according to his own announcement, and during the ten minutes which followed the collegians had all the sport they wanted.

Knowing that upon his ability to do this properly a great deal depended, Reuben literally surpassed himself, swinging his arms around until he looked like those wooden figures of "saw boys," which are put in some elevated position to show the direction of the wind.

It was impossible for his tormentors to conceal their mirth at this comical display.

Some stood at the windows, pretending to gaze into the street; others covered their faces with handkerchiefs, and more than one rolled over and over on the floor, making every effort to suppress loud shrieks of laughter.

Reuben paid no attention to anything about him; he

was on the burning deck with the brave boy, and, as Billy Moore afterward said, "stayed there for all he was worth."

He looked around on finishing, as if to receive praise, and the clerk, as soon as he could compose his features, said:

"Very well done, Plain Reuben, very well done. I ask as an especial favor that you insist on the dean's hearing that magnificent burst of eloquence, and I am quite certain he will overlook the report which the examiners are going to make."

"Do you really think so?"

"I firmly believe he would even go so far as to put you in a cage, if he realized how much you can do in the way of entertaining the other students. You may never know the whyness of the thus; but you have a fund of knowledge peculiar to yourself which should never be allowed to leave the classic precincts of this venerable pile. My portion of the work is done, and I shall most certainly recommend that you be retained at any cost, even that of breaking our most cherished rules."

"What shall I do? Go to the dean?" the freshman asked, eagerly.

"Not quite yet; he is too busy just now to permit of his listening to your burning eloquence. I would advise that Messrs. Moore and Moody keep you in custody until all the formalities have been complied with. They will instruct you as to what should be done, and now, young gentlemen, you may leave me while I finish Plain Reuben's horoscope."

The students, with the freshman in their midst, filed out of the room, and the clerk hastily divested himself of his borrowed robes to follow the party at a safe distance.

"As a matter of course, you intend to join the fence club," Billy said, as he walked downstairs with Reuben, and the latter asked, curiously:

"What's that?"

"An association composed only of the most distinguished students. By becoming a member you are entitled to sit on the fence in front of Durfee Hall at any time. It is an honor which any young gentleman may well feel proud of, and I am certain your Matilda would be pleased to hear how well you are progressing."

"Does it cost much?"

"About five dollars; but the initiation is rather difficult."

"What does a feller have to do?"

"On being made a member he first pays his fee, which is used solely for the benefit of the association, and then it is necessary to remain on the fence exactly sixty minutes, when any one of the club may approach and ask not more than three questions, all of which must be answered correctly and respectfully."

"I reckon that ain't anything very hard."

"Well, if you want to join, now is the best time, for it gives you an air of distinction to start with, and our supreme fencer is on the ground, something that doesn't often happen."

Reuben took the amount from his pocket, saying, as he handed it to Billy:

"Here's the money, an' the sooner the thing is over the better."

The five-dollar note was accepted gracefully, and, leaving the victim in charge of Roy, Billy hurried forward to make the required arrangements.

The supreme fencer took his position on the top of a post, and Reuben was led forward.

"You ask a great favor for one who has been here only a few hours," that official said, sternly; "but Mr. Moore vouches for you so strongly that I am inclined to suspend the rules on this occasion. Are you ready to obey our first command?"

"If you mean sitting on the fence an hour, I reckon I can stand it."

"It is also necessary to promise to be here at least once each day, and remain not less than ten minutes, unless the thermometer be below zero, in which case by getting a written certificate from the professors of the School of Medicine to the effect that the weather is too cold, you will be excused."

"Do you come out here when it rains?" Reuben asked, in surprise.

"In such cases we apply to the professor of astronomy, and get his permission to stay indoors."

"Is that all?"

"You will know more as you grow older, Mr. Plain Reuben; but I fancy it is as much as your gigantic intellect can grasp at present."

"Then I'm ready to begin; I gave Mr. Moore the

money," and the freshman leaped nimbly to the top of the fence.

"We will now retire for consultation," the supreme fencer said, with a dignified air; "but you may expect your questioners at any time."

He bowed low to the boy on the fence, as did the other members of the party, and in a few moments Reuben was left alone.

"What are you going to do with the money, Billy?" one of the students asked, and Mr. Moore replied, promptly:

"Spend it for the benefit of the club, as a matter of course. When the last cent has vanished we will stir our elegant freshman up once more," and Billy led the way to a certain rendezvous, which he knew intimately well.

CHAPTER IV.

REUBEN'S LETTER.

If Mr. Green's mission in life was to furnish amusement for those around him, he had begun in an eminently successful and pleasing manner, to those who had him temporarily in charge.

The five dollars which he had contributed were quickly spent, thanks to the size of the party, and cautiously the young gentlemen returned to where the initiatory services were being held.

Reuben was still there, looking as solemn as any owl in his native State, whistling in a meditative manner, as if thinking of the honors which awaited him after the hour he had spent on the fence.

Then the fun grew fast and furious.

Each fellow came up alone, and asked him the most ridiculous, and, in some cases, impertinent questions; but Reuben answered to the best of his ability, or else stated plainly that he was ignorant, and the sport grew monotonous.

After an hour had been spent in this manner, the supreme fencer announced that the candidate was a member in good standing, and Reuben came down from his lofty perch, looking back at the rail as he rubbed carefully

certain portions of his body which had been in contact with the unyielding wood too long for comfort.

"Now, the question is where he will live," Roy Moody said, feeling it was time they "let up" on their victim for a while. "Have you got rooms, Plain Reuben?"

"No; father said I'd best bunk in where the most of the other fel—I mean, young gentlemen—did, so's I'd get acquainted."

"Supposing he takes those directly over mine?" Roy proposed. "They are vacant, and we don't want to let him get away from us. Plain Reuben is too good to lose."

The new student was perfectly willing to follow any advice given by those who had been so kind to him, and, after being shown the rooms, announced his intention of taking them.

"Now, how shall I get my trunk up here?" he asked. "There are lots of nice things in it, an' I'd give you fel— young gentlemen, I mean, a reg'lar feast. I've a whole roast turkey."

"The dean will attend to your baggage. He has the management of all that sort of work; I'll see if he has forgotten it," and Billy ran down the stairs, intent only on having his full share of Reuben's delicacies.

To find the hack-driver who had so often aided in his pranks was but the work of a few moments, and soon the baggage was brought into the house, with an alleged humble apology from the dean that it had not been attended to earlier.

Reuben had no idea of dividing the contents quite so readily, however.

“Wait till evening, an’ I’ll give you a whack at it,” he said, as he pulled the brass-nailed trunk into one corner. “By this time you fel—young gentlemen, I mean—have found out pretty-nigh all I know, so I may as well tell you I promised Tildy I’d write to her the very first thing after I got in a room where it could be done.”

“Then you shall be left alone, my dear sir, and remember, if there is anything you want, pound on the floor, and I’ll come at once. Of course, you understand that one of the most stringent rules made by the founder of this temple of learning is to the effect that no student shall send a letter to his sweetheart until it has been read and approved by a majority of the members of the club to which he may belong.”

“What’s that for?” and Reuben looked up quickly, in distress.

“I can’t really say; it’s a relic of the old Connecticut Blue Laws, of which you have heard so much, and is rigidly enforced here.”

“Well, all I can say is it’s a mighty mean thing. Who wants to write to a girl, and have all hands see it?”

“You are making a slight mistake as to that. Only one sees it, and he reads it aloud to the others.”

“If it has to be, I reckon there’s no use kicking; but it don’t seem right.”

“That’s a fact, yet trying to escape the ordeal is useless,” and Billy looked profoundly sorry as he pressed the

freshman's hand. "We'll come as soon as you are ready, and have the disagreeable task done quickly."

Then he motioned to his companions, and Plain Reuben was left to ponder over the odd rules of Yale.

"Are you surely going to read his letter to Matilda, Billy?" one of the party asked, when all were in Roy's room, waiting for the freshman's signal.

"Of course I am. If he's such a fool as to let us bamboozle him in this fashion, the sooner he gets his eyeteeth cut the better it will be for him. What's more, I'm counting on having the whole of that turkey before he's ready to tackle it."

"Let Billy alone; he has engineered this affair so far in the most skillful manner, and we had better leave him in charge of the freshman from Aurora."

This was the opinion of the majority, and Billy enjoyed the distinction he had earned many times before, of being the one student most "capable of putting a freshman through his paces."

Just at this moment, however, he had some private business on hand, and, excusing himself to his companions, he went hurriedly upstairs to Reuben's apartments.

That young gentleman had begun his letter to Tildy, and looked up inquiringly as his friend entered.

"I only came to caution you about one thing," Billy said, in a whisper. "You spoke about a roasted turkey you had brought with you."

"Yes, mother fixed it up so's I could have some home cooking in case I felt lonesome."

"It was very thoughtful on your mother's part; but I am afraid you won't have a chance to enjoy it."

"Why not?"

"Because the dean is very particular about refusing to allow eatables in the shape of meat to be brought into the students' rooms. Now, when he comes to examine your trunk, he'll be likely to confiscate the turkey, and you'll be left."

"What'll I do?" Reuben asked, in distress. "I want it for myself."

"Of course you do. That is natural. Now, when I have anything of the kind from home, I always hang it out of the window by a string. If you let it down low enough the other buildings will hide it from view, and nobody 'll be any the wiser in regard to its whereabouts."

"I'll do that now," Reuben replied, as he hunted for a string. "You're mighty good, to put me up to these things, an' shall have a piece of the turkey before morning."

"I really believe I shall," Billy said, confidently, as he showed his new friend exactly how the fowl should be hung in order to keep it from view of the dean.

"Now go on with your letter, and I wouldn't make it very long, for it's only the first one you have to let them read, so get it off your mind at once."

"All right. I reckon I'll be through by the time you fellers—young gentlemen, I mean—get up here."

"I'll bring them in five minutes; that'll give plenty of time for the love words."

Billy hurried to the floor below, announced to his

friends the time had arrived when they could hear and discuss "Tildy's letter," and the "young gentlemen" filed up the stairs, each looking as if something very important was about to happen.

It really was a relief to Reuben to see them so solemn.

He had been afraid they would come to make sport; but they appeared to be so deeply impressed with the gravity of the business on hand that it seemed almost as if they should read, in order to ascertain whether it might be correct, that which he had written to the young lady in Aurora.

As usual, Billy opened the meeting. While he was present, no one else would have ventured to undertake such a thing, because all knew him to be eminently fitted for the task.

"My position of reader for freshmen, and particularly very freshmen, holds over from last term, until my successor can be appointed, so the dean informs me," he began, gravely. "I have wished that some other gentleman was able to do this, because Plain Reuben is a friend—I might say an intimate friend—and it hardly seems right to pry into his secrets."

It is just possible Billy's heart misgave him at that moment, for Reuben looked so troubled and anxious he might have thought he was carrying a joke too far.

Roy Moody did not give him much time for penitence, however.

"Since it is your duty, and no one here can act in your place, suppose you begin, that the job may be finished quickly?"

Reuben held toward his friend a large sheet of paper, on which were many ink-stains, in addition to a small amount of writing, and Billy, after clearing his throat and seating himself on the table, began:

MY DEAREST TILDY: I now take my pen in hand to write these few lines, hoping they may find you enjoying the same good health as myself.

I did not arrive here until this noon; but have had a great deal of good luck since then. Two of the young gentlemen made friends with me at once, and you can't think how much they've helped me. If it hadn't been for them I'd ridden up to the college in a hired hack, which is dead against the rules, and perhaps done lots of other things that would have made them think I was green.

A regular procession took me to the school, and I had to keep bowing all the time we were going through the streets just the same as political speakers from Bangor do when they come down to Aurora.

It sort of looked as if I had struck a snag when I went before the examiners; but I got out of it by speaking "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck," and if I do say it myself, there ain't many who can beat me at that sort of thing, you know, because you heard me in the very same piece last winter at the debating society.

I've been elected to one club already; it costs quite a sum, and some of the services didn't seem pleasant, but I got through all right, and now I reckon I can hold my head as high as the rest of them.

You know how much I love you, Tildy; but I don't like to say it here, because the first letter a feller writes to a girl he has to show to his club, and I'm afraid they would make fun if I should say the same things I did last Sunday night when we were coming home. You know how I feel, though, and in the next letter I'll put all the love that belongs here.

Yours till death,

REUBEN GREEN.

P. S.—They call me Plain Reuben here. You see I got mixed when I told them what my name was, and they hold to what I said first.

R. G.

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSING TURKEY.

“Now, that’s what I call a great letter,” Billy said, as he ceased reading, folded the sheet, and handed it to Reuben, whose cheeks flushed deeply because of the compliment.

“I move it be allowed to go to its destination,” Roy cried. “All who are in favor of the motion will please signify it in the usual manner.”

Again the entire party stood up, with left hands extended above their heads and the right swinging in the air, until there seemed every danger that some one would receive a severe blow.

Then Tom Hardy, a member of the party who had as yet said very little, attracted the “reader’s” attention by a series of very low bows, and said, in a deprecatory tone:

“I have voted to allow the letter to be sent; but even as I did so it seemed to me that a wrong had been done this honorable body.”

“In what way?” Billy asked, excitedly.

“Because Plain Reuben neglected to put in those words of love. He specifically states that he omits them because of the fact that the letter must be read before the members of his club. Now, I ask if it is proper? How do we know but that he may be intending on the next occasion

to write something which will reflect upon our fair name as young gentlemen, who share the responsibilities and take all the burdens that come to this our *alma mater*?"

"The point is well taken," Billy replied, thoughtfully.

"But I sha'n't do anything of the kind!" Reuben cried, leaping to his feet, excitedly. "You can't expect a fellow—I mean, a young gentleman—is going to say a whole lot of stuff to a girl he is soft on, when a crowd has got to hear it, can you? She knows what I ought to write, and I know it, too; but, you see, I don't feel like doing it before all hands."

Billy looked around inquiringly, as if to ask if any one else had a remark to make, and Roy rose to his feet quickly.

"Mr. Reader, and you honorable gentlemen," he began, "while it has not been my good fortune to know the bright example of a freshman, which we have before us in the person of our friend from Aurora, many hours, I must say that I agree with him perfectly. What he may or may not have said to Tildy on the night when he escorted her home from church is something about which we should not concern ourselves. Thus far, with the exception of the examination, he has acquitted himself in a proper and a gentlemanly manner; therefore I am willing the letter should be sent as it is, without further inquiry as to the honeyed words he used last Sunday."

"It must stand that way, since our solemn vote has already been taken," Billy replied, gravely. "If the gentlemen had any fault to find, it should have been done some time ago. Therefore, as reader of love letters to

old Yale, I hereby give my consent to his sending the missive so poetically penned, provided, of course, he adds nothing thereto, nor takes aught away."

Reuben gave vent to a deep sigh of relief that this ordeal was safely passed, and Roy took charge of the letter, after its author had sealed it properly.

"I shall myself see to its being deposited with the valuable letters in the post office, and the mail robber who mutilates or delays it will incur the enmity of the powerful corporation of Fencers."

He would have left the room alone, but Billy prevented it by saying:

"As love reader to this ancient and venerable pile of learning, it is my duty to see the epistle is safely placed in the proper space, to be forwarded without delay, therefore I leave my friend Green, Plain Reuben, in your care, gentlemen, until my return."

To their credit, let it be said the boys first dropped the letter in the nearest mail-box, and then returned hurriedly to finish the work Billy had laid out for the night.

Reuben's rooms were directly above Roy's, and the string to which the roasted turkey was attached passed across the window.

"Our fresh friend has generously offered to give us a share of this noble bird," Billy said to Roy, as he pulled the delicacy in through the opening; "but what would it amount to among so many? Now, I think a whole loaf goes 'way ahead of half-a-one, and propose to dissect the dainty in such a manner that Plain Reuben shall have the skeleton, but nothing else."

Then, more skillfully than the demonstrator of anatomy would have given him credit for, Billy sliced off the light as well as the dark meat, excavated all the stuffing, and placed the whole in a paper bag, which Roy held open so none should be wasted.

Not until the carcass had been stripped of everything eatable did Billy cease his labors, and then it was to say:

“I reckon Plain Reuben has as much left as he deserves. The idea of coming here and talking about dividing a small bird like this into at least fifty equal parts! Why, by the time you, Tom, and I get all we want there won't be any over, and the other fellows can stand hunger a good deal better than I. Put that in the closet, and we'll make out we've just come from the post office.”

Five minutes later Billy and Roy entered Reuben's room, as if having arrived from a long journey, during which rapid traveling had been the order of the day.

Both were breathing heavily, and sank exhausted in chairs, after reaching the apartment.

“We succeeded in getting there just in time for the next mail, and now, if our freshman has anything in the way of a feast, it is high time he produced it, for I feel too empty for comfort.”

Reuben rose to his feet at once, and the brass-nailed trunk was overhauled for accessories to the feast, of which the turkey was to be the principal dish.

The others helped him spread the one small table which was to answer for all, and the heavily-frosted cake was necessarily placed on the same sheet of paper which held the pie, because of the lack of room.

Even if the guests had not been expecting the turkey, it was an inviting layout, and every fellow's mouth watered in anticipation, save the two who knew only too well what a dire disappointment was dangling outside the window.

"It seems as if he had shrunk since I hung him here," Reuben said, as he pulled in the string with its appendage. "He weighed fifteen pounds when mother bought him, and now he——"

The freshman ceased speaking very suddenly.

The entire length of cord had been drawn in, and at the end hung nothing more than a neatly-picked skeleton.

"Say, that ain't right!" Billy cried, angrily, as he sprang to his feet, apparently in a rage. "A joke is a joke, and should be taken as such; but this is what I call carrying the thing a little too far. I don't fancy such tricks, myself!"

"Who did it?" some one shouted, and Billy replied:

"That's what I'd like to know! It ain't serving Plain Reuben justly."

Even Billy's most intimate friends would have said he was "fighting mad," and Roy himself might have been deceived but for the fact that he had assisted in the dissection of the noble bird.

Reuben could do no more than look at the skeleton in amazement.

That such a theft should be committed in a college where it was almost a crime to speak of a young gentleman as a "fellow" seemed impossible.

"There's no question but that it is gone," he said, ruefully, and Billy cried, as he rushed from the room:

"It's some of them mean sneaks from the town, and if one of 'em is around here now, he'll find out what it costs to do a thing like this."

He was absent some time, during which the remainder of the party discussed the daring robbery in all its details, without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion, and Billy announced, on his return:

"There isn't a soul to be seen. Most likely it was done while we were reading the letter, so the best thing now is to eat the other stuff Plain Reuben has set out, and keep the bones to look at."

His companions were perfectly willing to compromise in this manner, and while Reuben watched the turkey bones with a mournful air they cleared the table of every eatable, Tom Hardy saying, as he took the last fragment of cake:

"Our freshman has put up a good lunch, and it would have been better if we'd had the bird; but I ain't one of those who go around looking a gift horse in the mouth, so say we've done mighty well."

Perhaps Reuben was of the same opinion.

When his mother put those delicacies in his trunk he imagined there was enough to last him a month, at the very least, and yet all had disappeared in a quarter of an hour.

Not so much as a crumb remained for himself, unless it be possible to stew the turkey's bones into a sort of soup, and he thought ruefully that with many such friends

as those who were now calling upon him, it would be worse than useless to expect anything in the way of home-cooking without selfishly devouring the whole in secret.

"I'm sorry there wasn't more," he managed to say, after a long and awkward pause; "but, you see, I was counting on the turkey's helping out."

"Don't mention it, my dear sir," Billy said, with an air of condescension. "We have already had a great deal more than we deserve, and a prince couldn't have done better."

These few words of praise soothed the freshman from Aurora to a certain extent, and he began to think that perhaps, after all, the loss of the bird was not so great as to be of much importance.

"You fel—I mean, young gentlemen—shall have some of mother's cooking before this term is over, for I'll ask her to send two turkeys, and the one who gets away with them will be smarter than I am."

Then the members of the noble club of Fencers took their leave, and as they trooped down the stairs, with no particular heed as to whether they made a noise or not, Billy whispered to Roy:

"To the victors belong the spoils. Wait half-an-hour, and then I'll sneak into your room; we'll have Plain Reuben's turkey all to ourselves, or know the reason why."

"Ain't you going to ask him for a share?"

"Not a bit of it. When a man is so thick-headed, he ought to lose his boots, instead of only one small bird that won't go as far as it should in satisfying my appetite, which was only sharpened by the cake."

CHAPTER VI.

INNOCENT AND GREEN.

Billy felt as one would suppose a victorious general, just returning from a campaign, might, as he seated himself in his room, waiting for the moment when he might return to Roy's.

The remains—perhaps it would be proper to say all—of the turkey brought from Aurora was snugly stowed away, ready for eating without the trouble of using a knife or fork, and he believed the matter had been managed in the most skillful manner possible.

“It was worth the price of the supper just to see Plain Reuben's face when he pulled up the skeleton,” the practical joker said to himself, with a chuckle of satisfaction. “If that fellow don't get his eyeteeth cut pretty soon he'll be the death of all hands, for who can buckle down to study with such a fresh specimen around waiting for the boys to have fun with him?”

In this manner, alternately praising himself and laughing at the freshman from Aurora, Billy passed the time until he crept softly back, and then the two spent several moments in gleeful conversation regarding their victim and his disappointment.

“We must contrive to get up some kind of a secret order between now and to-morrow night,” Billy said, as

he took the paper bag full of sliced turkey from its hiding-place, "and give him an invitation such as he'll be likely to enjoy. We might fix up my quarters for a lodge-room, and he'll be bound to join whatever we propose, if the thing is put as something very swell."

"All right; we'll see the other fellows in the morning, and it won't take long to arrange the business. Hurry with that turkey; I'm as hungry as when I went to Greeny's room, for there wasn't more than half cake enough to go around."

"It would have been necessary for him to charter a freight car, if he counted on filling that crowd up," Billy replied, as he placed the stolen feast on the writing-table. "They could have gotten through with all on the farm without trying very hard."

The paper bag was torn down one side, in order to form a platter, and, with some soda-biscuit Roy brought from his closet, an ample lunch was spread out most temptingly.

It was now so late in the evening that there was no thought of visitors, more especially since the other conspirators had retired, thinking all sport was over for the night, and the gas was allowed to burn at full head, while the door was left unlocked.

"Now, pitch in, but don't try to get more than your share," Billy said, as he set the example, and the two began what it was believed would be a thoroughly enjoyable meal, when the door suddenly opened.

Looking up in surprise, the feasters saw none other than Plain Reuben standing on the threshold.

"May I come in?" he asked, in a tone of mild entreaty. "I want to know when the young gentlemen are supposed to commence their studies."

Billy glanced nervously at the sliced turkey, while Roy made a movement as if to cover the telltale meat; but desisted as the thought came into his mind that by so doing he would be making a clear admission of guilt.

The evident embarrassment of the boys surprised even Reuben, who was not quick at drawing conclusions, and involuntarily he gazed toward the table.

It is true he knew little or nothing regarding college life; but he had lived in the country long enough to recognize roast turkey when he saw it, and an expression of perplexity came over his face.

Billy soon recovered his customary composure.

"Sit right down, Plain Reuben," he said, generously, seizing his newly-made friend by the coat, thus forcing him to comply. "You said so much about turkey that we got really hungry for it, and Roy proposed we buy one from the nearest restaurant. If we had thought for a moment you were awake, you would have been bidden to the feast when we returned from downtown."

"You surely are pretty hungry to need all that," Reuben said, faintly, as he scrutinized the slices of meat, many of which looked as if they had been torn, rather than cut off.

"We were. You have no idea how Connecticut air sharpens one's appetite. When I first came to this city a sparrow's portion was too much for me; but now this amount is no more than a lunch, which can easily be disposed of after such a meal as I had in your room. Roy,

help Plain Reuben to some of the dark meat. It isn't what you could probably get at home, my dear sir; but I was assured by the party who sold it to us that the bird came from Maine, therefore you shouldn't be disappointed in the flavor."

Roy helped the uninvited guest more liberally than the giver of the feast intended, for he put, in addition to several generous slices, a goodly portion of the dressing in front of the bewildered boy.

"Don't be bashful," Billy said, with a wink at Roy. "What we have in this line is yours, and that you should be certain of by this time."

Reuben appeared as if he believed it had once been his; but made no reply.

He took a mouthful of the dressing, tasted it critically, and said, half to himself:

"It is as good as my mother can make."

"I am truly glad to hear you say so, Plain Reuben, and to-morrow you shall see the gentleman we got it from—that is, if it is possible. I am certain all which comes from his place is satisfactory, and hope you will treat him well. There are several cooks in this city who formerly lived in Maine."

The look of perplexity on Reuben's face grew darker as he helped himself to another mouthful, and there could be no question but that his suspicions were aroused as to the former ownership of the turkey.

Billy talked rapidly, meanwhile eating as fast as was in his power; but Reuben was more moderate in his movements.

He had been a trifle homesick when he came down to gain information, and this deepened to positive pain as he began to think that those who had professed to be such friends should thus deprive him of his own.

The two conspirators were quick to note this, and exchanged meaning glances, when Billy asked, carelessly:

“Which of the college societies do you propose joining, Plain Reuben?”

“Why, I thought I was already a member of the best.”

“How is that?” and now Billy, having forgotten the sport of the forenoon, looked astonished.

“Didn’t I join the Fencers?”

“Oh, yes, but that was only a club, you know! There are several societies of a secret nature here, and if a student wants to stand well with the professors he will become a member with the least possible delay.”

“What are they?”

“I can hardly explain the nature of them, for everything in connection with the matter is a profound secret; even the names are withheld from the uninitiated.”

“Then, how does a fel—young gentleman, I mean—know which one to join?”

“He has to depend upon his best friends for advice. Now, I could tell you of one, which, in case you want to graduate with honors, should receive the preference.”

Reuben looked sadly at the turkey and then at Billy, wondering if, under the circumstances, he had a right to consider that young gentleman as one of his best friends; but the latter appeared so kindly solicitous that he resolved to dismiss all unpleasant thoughts from his mind.

"If you think I really ought——"

"Of course you had. How would it sound in Aurora, and especially to Tilda, if some Yale graduate should chance that way, and she was forced to tell him that you had become connected with the ancient club of Fencers, but was not admitted to one of the leading societies?"

This was a poser, and Reuben hesitated only a few seconds before he said:

"Of course, I want to be in all that's going, and if you say I oughter join I'll do it."

"I will have matters arranged at once, so when you go downtown the tradespeople will recognize you as a student of proper standing."

"How will outsiders know anything about it, if the society is such a secret one?"

"There is a regular badge, which tells even to the ignorant that you are 'way up in college life. Of course, those living here in the city look for some such mark of distinction before making very much of a student."

"Does it cost very much?"

"That you will learn later on. I will see some of those high in authority, at the earliest possible moment, and if you are acceptable as a member, due notification will be sent. Have some more of the turkey?"

Reuben was not particularly hungry just then, but watched in silence his alleged friends as they devoured the last fragments.

Then it was evident he had something on his mind, and after waiting a short time for him to unbosom himself, Billy asked:

"Ain't you troubled with some matter connected with the college? If you are, don't hesitate to come right out with it, for I am always ready to aid one who promises such opportunities for sport as you do."

"Well, yes—that is I—didn't you tell me that the dean came around every night to the young gentlemen's rooms?"

Billy had told so many wonderful stories that for the moment he was puzzled to understand what Reuben meant, and the latter aided his memory by saying:

"I thought it wasn't proper for a student to go to sleep without being tucked in bed by one of the faculty."

"And you are quite right; having been here so long, the ceremony seems like something which really is a part of a fellow's life, the same as getting up in the morning. I suppose you are sleepy, and want him to come as soon as possible?"

"Well, yes, I would like to get a little rest; but don't want to do anything out of the way, you know."

"Certainly not. For my sake, and I am in a certain measure responsible for your movements, I hope you won't be careless in regard to established rules. Now, it is out of the question to expect the dean to walk over here simply to attend to one student, when he thinks we are all in bed you will see him. Try to be patient until he comes."

"What shall I do while waiting for him? I can't sit up in a chair all night."

"But you must do so a portion of the time, my dear sir.

Try to make the best of it until you have become accustomed to the ways of the college."

"Very well," Reuben said, with a sigh, as he rose to his feet; "but it comes kind of hard to a fellow who is in the habit of going to bed pretty early, to sit up so late."

"You'll get used to it in a short while," Billy replied, encouragingly, and then, as the young gentleman from Aurora left the room, he said to Roy: "Did you ever see anything so innocent and green?"

"Never!" Roy answered, solemnly, "and if he continues long in this calf-stage we shall have lots of fun."

CHAPTER VII.

INITIATION.

Billy Moore had the credit, and there can be no question but that it was well earned, of being a fellow who cared more for sport than the work of holding a proper rank in his class.

Anything which offered an opportunity for fun was eagerly accepted by him, and he had resolved that while Mr. Reuben Green remained so nearly akin to his name he would devote all his time to bringing out that young gentleman's peculiarities.

Therefore it was that on the following morning his earliest thought was regarding the initiation of Plain Reuben, which he resolved should take place at the first opportunity, lest the proposed victim should learn more about college life than would be convenient for his tormentors.

It was not necessary to spend very much time enlisting the services of the other students.

A single word was sufficient to render them very eager to admit Mr. Green into any society which might have its origin in Billy's fertile brain, and each one he spoke with promised to do his best to make the initiation a gigantic success, so far as a good time was concerned.

Having given a rude outline of what he proposed doing,

leaving a few friends to attend to the preparations, Billy went with Roy to Plain Reuben's room before breakfast, in order to acquaint him with his good fortune.

A knock at his door failed to bring any response, and Billy opened it unceremoniously.

The young gentleman from Aurora was seated in a very uncomfortable position, snoring loudly. A portion of his clothes had been removed, and it looked as if he had partially made ready for bed before yielding to the embraces of the drowsy god.

"Hello! what's the matter here?" Billy cried, as he shook the sleeper roughly. "Haven't you been in bed yet?"

Reuben leaped to his feet, rubbing his eyes, while he looked around in bewilderment, as do those who are suddenly aroused from slumber.

"Do you generally spend the night in a chair?" Billy asked, laughingly.

"Is it morning?"

"I should say it was, and pretty late at that. What has been the matter with you?"

"I was waiting for the dean; but he never came."

"What?" and both Billy and Roy were obliged to turn their backs to the freshman, in order to hide the laughter which could not be repressed.

"It's true. I stayed here till past three o'clock, working mighty hard to keep my eyes from closing, and then couldn't hold out any longer. He ought to know that a fellow who traveled all day would be tired."

"Of course he should, and I can't offer any apology for

him. At all events, you have the right to an explanation, and I would insist on one. The dean of Yale College is very remiss in his duties, when a gentleman to whom all the honors have been paid is forced to sleep in a chair, simply because he hasn't been tucked in bed."

"I really don't think it is serving me exactly right," Reuben said, in an injured tone.

"Of course it isn't, my boy, and the faculty should hear of it if the case was mine."

"I don't want to make any complaints the very first day."

"But your dignity must be upheld, and now is the time to begin."

"What ought I to do?"

"Send a letter to the trustees at once. Write it now, and I'll see that it is posted immediately. If students don't take care of their own honor, no one else will."

"Perhaps I had better wait and hear what he has to say to-night."

"Don't defer until to-morrow what should be done to-day. I hadn't intended to tell you so soon; but now it is necessary. Show your standing in this college by complaining about the neglect of last night, and say that you have been elected a member of one of the most influential societies to be found within this venerable pile of learning. If you should neglect what is a duty to yourself, as well as your fellow-students, I hardly know how the members would treat the matter, for they are great sticklers on such subjects."

This was sufficient to convince Reuben he should follow

the advice given, and, without further delay, he began a letter of complaint to the trustees, because the dean had not tucked him in bed on the night previous.

Roy was nearly exploding with mirth as Billy looked over the freshman's shoulder to make certain the language used was sufficiently strong, and when the missive was completed Master Moore said, as he put it in his pocket:

"I will see that it is delivered at the proper time, and also inform those who have done you such an honor as to elect you to their ranks, that you are a man who knows what is due to himself. Have you had breakfast yet?"

"Of course not; didn't you find me here sleeping?"

"That is true. Now, both you and Roy shall have the morning meal with me, and if we don't eat in the company of the gentleman who supplied the turkey for our lunch last night, then I'm mistaken."

Reuben looked up quickly, as if understanding that there was more to the words than at first appeared, and Billy, in order to delay further suspicion, urged him to make haste, unless he was willing the less-important students should get to the dining-room in time to occupy all the best seats.

The young gentleman from Aurora gazed scrutinizingly at his alleged friends, but Billy's face wore an expression of most perfect innocence, while Roy appeared to be thinking of nothing more mischievous than how he might secure the best seat at the table, therefore it really seemed cruel to suspect them.

Plain Reuben did not wear as jaunty an air on this day as when he marched through the city in triumph.

The fatigue of sitting in a chair all night waiting for the dean's coming caused him to look weary and jaded as he went with his friends to breakfast; but he revived wonderfully after partaking of the meal.

He did not ask Billy to point out the person who had taken his turkey, and Master Moore was not quite certain it would be prudent to revive the conversation on that topic.

When the three sauntered out of the building, Reuben received no slight amount of courtesy from his fellow-students, each of whom seemed to think it necessary to inquire concerning his health, and this mark of attention was very pleasing to the freshman.

More than one had some mysterious remark to make concerning a very important event in the history of Yale, which was to be written on the pages of history that day, and Billy explained the meaning of the words as referring to the initiation which was about to take place.

"I thought they always did such things in the evening," Reuben said, in surprise.

"It may be the rule in inferior societies; but a circle of very select young gentlemen like the one which has consented to receive you, make laws unto themselves which cannot be changed. You will be introduced to the brotherhood in an hour, and I advise that you spend the time in silent meditation."

"Why should I do that?"

"Because you will need such preparation. Go to your room, and when the Graciously Supreme Master is ready, messengers will be sent to conduct you to his presence.

Reuben was awed by the solemn tone which Billy assumed, and obeyed without protest.

“Why didn’t you wait till evening?” Roy asked, when the two conspirators were alone.

“I want to give him a long whack at the business, and when it comes night he’ll be ready to tumble into bed. There won’t be much chance for such larks after to-day, and we must make the most of the time. You stay on guard to see that he don’t change his mind and slip off, while I give the other fellows the word that we’re about to begin the services.”

Half-an-hour later, while pondering over the disappearance of his turkey, and the singular fact that his friends should have had the same kind of a lunch a short time later, Plain Reuben was startled by a resounding knock on the door of his room.

For the moment he had forgotten the “great honor” which was to come to him on that day, and, wondering who the visitor could be, he opened the door.

Two “young gentlemen” wearing silk hats rather the worse for long usage, and with short masks of black cloth covering their faces, stood silent and motionless on the threshold.

Reuben gazed in astonishment, waiting for the strangers to speak; but they simply extended their hands.

He fancied this was a form of welcome, and would have shaken hands; but they resented it by violent gestures.

“What do you want, anyhow?” he finally asked, impatiently.

In answer the visitors motioned him to follow them, and suddenly the truth of the matter dawned upon him.

"I reckon you've come to take me to the Graciously Supreme Master?" he said, and the newcomers bowed gravely.

Reuben put on his hat, and the masked messengers seized him by the arms, hurrying the candidate for new honors down the corridor in anything rather than a tender fashion.

The freshman tried to hang back, but all in vain, and during the five minutes which followed he was forced to race back and forth, down one hallway and up another, until his captors were obliged to halt through sheer lack of breath.

Then he was taken in charge by two others while a third deftly bandaged his eyes before he could make any resistance, and again the mad race was continued, not to be ended until it seemed impossible for him to take another step.

The opening and closing of a door told that he was in an apartment of some kind, and just as he attempted to learn by the sense of touch where he had been brought, his hands were tied securely behind his back.

"Look here! I don't like this sort of thing!" he cried, angrily, but without receiving any reply.

The silence was so profound that he understood they had left him alone, and his anger rose very angrily.

"Let me out!" he shouted. "I won't stand this sort of thing!"

After he had screamed himself hoarse, a sepulchral voice from an adjoining apartment cried:

“Silence, rash youth, lest all the horrors of the Ramadan be let loose! Who art thou to raise thy voice in the halls of the sacred Gunjabee? Be still, Plain Reuben, and prepare thyself for the ordeal which awaits thee.”

This was sufficient to reduce the trembling freshman to submission, and he remained silent and motionless, wishing sincerely that he had never been eager to gain such questionable honors.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SACRED GUNJABEE.

While the unhappy freshman was suffering both mental and bodily pain, Billy was amusing the members of his "very swell secret society" by reading the letter of complaint which Reuben had sent, or supposed he sent, to the dean.

The fellows were forced to stifle their laughter, lest it should be heard by the victim, and more than one rolled over and over on the floor, struggling with his mirth, as he thought of what the result would be if the missive should really be delivered to the dignified officer of the college.

Billy had made his preparations for the initiation with great care, assisted, of course, by his friends, and the result was surprising even to himself.

The room was a large one, and used as a sleeping apartment by one of the students.

By a skillful arrangement of table covers and parti-colored blankets, the bed had been converted into a throne, while the bureau formed an altar, on which were a dozen candles, ready to be lighted at the proper moment.

The walls were draped with black, on which was painted in white a motley collection of skulls, bleeding

hearts, crossbones and daggers, not very skillfully drawn, but startling because of their number and grotesqueness.

At different points around the room were placed certain articles which would be necessary during the ceremonies, and in every available place was hung some kind of a weapon, even carving-knives forming a portion of the display.

As a matter of course, Billy was the Graciously Supreme Master, and his costume was a gorgeous uniform, plentifully trimmed with gold lace, which he had hired for the occasion. From his neck was suspended a huge skull, and in his hand a heavy cavalry saber.

He, like all the others, was provided with a mask of black cloth, and each student present had arrayed himself either in hired garments, or something improvised from the united wardrobes of all.

It was an odd-looking party, and even one accustomed to such mummery would have thought it picturesque, if nothing more, while there was every reason to believe the young gentleman from Aurora must be deeply impressed.

When all the fun possible had been gotten from the letter of reprimand to the dean, Billy said, as he mounted his throne and put on the mask:

“Now we’ll release our nervous friend from his condition of darkness, and introduce him to the sacred Gunjabee. Don’t lay it on too thick, for we are to keep the sport up as long as possible, and he may take it into his Eastern head to make a kick. We’ll put him through all the paces, and if a fellow finds it necessary to roar, let him

go into the other room, for Plain Reuben must believe this is a *bona fide* society. If the conductors are ready, let them bring in the candidate."

The two who had been selected for this duty went toward the door, and before opening it, cried:

"Is it permitted that the mortal in outer darkness be brought into the presence of the sacred Gunjabee?"

Then Billy asked in his gruffest tone:

"Is he prepared to brave all the dangers of the Ramadan?"

"He should be by this time, unless his heart has failed him."

"Then let him be brought forth."

All this was spoken so loudly that the unhappy Reuben could not fail to hear every word, and as the door was opened each one joined in the most mournful kind of a chant, Billy acting as the leader of the orchestra, furnishing the music from a comb around which a piece of tissue paper had been wrapped.

The sound of the voices gave the trembling freshman a trifle more courage, and he mentally nerved himself for the ordeal.

His conductors brought him into the room, marching him around it several times to make it appear as if of very great size, and then halted in one corner, where it was announced:

"Most Graciously Supreme Master, we have here the pride of Yale, who wishes to join our distinguished ranks."

"Has he been instructed as to what may be expected

of him in case he is allowed to become one of the immortals?"

"No word has been spoken to him."

"Why did I command that he be left in the outer darkness?"

"That he might learn to practice patience."

Reuben thought the voice of the chief actor in the performance sounded familiar, and he made strenuous efforts to remove the bandage from his eyes; but those who had him in charge took good care that this should not be possible.

"First prepare the cup of love," Billy commanded, "and when it is ready, he shall drink."

There were plenty of assistants in this operation. Reuben's hands were untied, his coat removed and the arm laid bare.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, in a low tone, of the fellow nearest.

"Draw three ounces of blood from your left arm that it may be mixed with ours, and thus form the loving cup. It won't take very long, but you may suffer some."

"I won't have it done!" the unhappy Reuben cried, struggling frantically to release himself from the clutches of his attendants.

"If the candidate rebels against our wise and just commands, take twice the quantity of the life fluid, and give him a double portion, that he may learn the meaning of generosity."

"You sha'n't!" the freshman screamed, making yet more desperate efforts to escape.

“It’s too late to draw back now; I wouldn’t answer for your life, if you made any serious trouble.”

Reuben couldn’t draw back, however much he wished to, for each limb was seized and firmly held.

Then the chant was begun once more, and when the alleged music was at its height, one of the party made a slight scratch across the left arm, not hard enough to draw blood, but sufficiently so to cause considerable pain.

As this was done another held a pitcher of warm water in such a manner that it would flow slowly across the mark of the pin, and fall, with a dripping noise, into a tin pan.

The sensation to the freshman was exactly as if he was actually being bled, and to heighten the illusion one of the party felt of his pulse, while others discussed the general condition of the patient.

“He is beginning to grow pale,” Reuben heard some one whisper. “I hope the Graciously Supreme won’t make such a mistake as he did last term, and allow the candidate to die.”

“Watch him closely, and when his lips grow blue make the fact known, for then it will not be too late to revive him.”

“If we take double the quantity, he’ll be so weak that he can’t walk for a week.”

“That can’t be helped, since we are ordered to perform the task.”

As may be supposed, this frightened the young man from Aurora very decidedly.

He fancied he really was growing weak, and ceased to struggle, but begged most piteously to be released.

Finally one of the party said, in an imploring tone:

“Graciously Supreme Master, wilt thou not rescind thy order, and allow us to check this flow of blood. The candidate is already nearly exhausted, and to take more of the life fluid from him may be dangerous.”

“What we have spoken must stand,” Billy replied, sternly. “Let the physician watch the pulse, that we may know if it is absolutely necessary to cease, for blood we are bound to have.”

Reuben groaned as this decision was given, and there was now no need to assume that he was growing pale, for his face was very white.

To continue the joke longer might really be serious, and the alleged physician announced in a loud tone:

“We have the required amount, and no injury has been done the candidate, of that I am certain.”

Then half-a-dozen assisted in binding up the supposed wound, and when it had been done with cloth sufficient to render it almost impossible for Reuben to move his arm, he was assisted to his seat.

At a signal from Billy all the members gathered around the victim in such a manner that he could not see the room when his eyes were uncovered, and glasses filled with colored water to represent blood were brought out.

“Remove the bandage. Since he is too weak to stand, we will allow him to remain seated during this portion of the ceremony.”

When Reuben could gaze about him, he saw a large

number of fantastically-dressed figures, each holding a weapon in one hand, and a glass of sinister-looking liquid in the other.

Billy, in all the splendor of his gorgeous raiment, stood directly in front of the victim, and said, as he handed a goblet to the freshman:

“Drink deep, ye who are about to receive the greatest honor mortals can bestow! By this draught only can you ever become a full-fledged member of our glorious brotherhood.”

“Then I’ll never be one, for I don’t count on drinking my own blood,” Reuben cried, with a shudder.

“Our will must be obeyed. Guards, do your duty!”

The victim was seized by half-a-dozen, and while one fellow held the candidate’s nose to oblige him to open his mouth, the alleged blood was poured down his throat, despite his frantic struggles.

Then the bandage was replaced, and the tormentors stepped back a few paces, to begin once more the doleful chant.

Before this portion of the ceremony came to an end, Reuben discovered that he was not as weak as he had been led to suppose, and resolved he would make one bold dash for liberty, if they were so incautious as to remove the bonds from his arms.

“You have now passed through the first stage,” Billy said, solemnly, “and it is only necessary to brand upon your breast the seal of our order. Are the irons ready?”

“They are!” came from the adjoining apartment.

“Bring them in, and see to it that the flesh is seared so deep that the mark can never be effaced.”

A moment later Reuben felt that something hot had been passed over his face, and he tried to shrink back, but willing hands held him, while others moved a lighted kerosene lamp back and forth in front of him.

“Keep him steady, and try not to disfigure his body, as in the last instance, when so much mischief was done,” Billy cried. “Let the brand be at a white heat.”

Reuben could remain inactive no longer. He believed he had been bled profusely; but to be branded for life was more than he would submit to, even though the struggle should cost him his life.

As the fellows pressed around him, he struck out with his feet vigorously, the force of the blow overturning the chair and himself.

“Don’t you dare to come near me!” he screamed, kicking at random in the hope of striking his tormentors; but as he was blindfolded they could readily keep out of his way.

CHAPTER IX.

“I’LL BE JIGGERED!”

Plain Reuben fought desperately, but all to no purpose.

Unable to see, he could not get within striking distance of those whom he had come to look upon as enemies, and the result was that his efforts resulted in nothing more than exhaustion.

He continued this useless sort of resistance, however, until it was no longer possible to stand, and then the members of the brotherhood took him in charge once more.

Billy ordered that he be stretched at full length upon the floor, after the bonds which confined his arms had been loosened a trifle in order to ease the pain, and once more the lamp was moved to and fro near him.

“We will forgive the outburst this time,” Billy said, in a tone of severity; “but if you so far forget yourself again, all the horrors of the dreaded Ramadan will be visited upon your head. Now, apply the branding iron, and let it sink deep.”

One of the party pressed the point of a piece of ice upon Reuben’s naked breast, and for a moment or two the sensation was the same as if something exceedingly hot had touched the flesh.

The victim writhed in agony, while the others discussed his general appearance during the torture, thus adding to

the imaginary pain, and after a few seconds elapsed the physician was called upon to dress the supposed wound.

Again was the freshman from Maine swathed in bandages, after salve had been plentifully smeared upon the flesh, and by this time Reuben began to consider himself a perfect wreck.

Once more he was seated in a chair facing the "throne," and the covering removed from his eyes.

Now the lodge room could be plainly distinguished, with the members standing silent and motionless against either wall, and all the paraphernalia scattered about where it might be seen to the best advantage.

Billy read the candidate a long lesson on the beauties of the society to which he had been partially admitted, and concluded by saying:

"Obedience to the laws of our order is the first lesson you must learn. It grieved me to see you so headstrong and obstinate when we were only laboring for your good——"

"Was it for my good that you bled me nearly to death, and then burned me?" Reuben asked, angrily.

"Yes, because only by such an ordeal could you become a member of this——"

"I don't want anything to do with the blamed old thing! I didn't count on being treated in this way, and if you hadn't tied me up it couldn't have been done. Don't forget, though, that I'll get square before I'm much older."

"I see that the most rigorous of the punishments must be administered," and Billy spoke as if it gave him the most intense mental pain to say such a thing.

"But I tell you I'm not going to join."

"It is too late to retract now. After having been allowed an insight into our secrets, the path must be pursued to the bitter end."

"I'd like to know what secrets I've been told?"

"Ask that of your arm and breast. You will find the answer there."

"I should say so."

"Remember to whom you are speaking, sir. The Gracious Supreme Master of the Sacred Order of Gunjabee allows no back talk."

At these words the members advanced threateningly with upraised weapons, and Reuben was silenced.

"We will spare his life; but some punishment fitting the crime must be devised. We will call a secret council to decide upon the matter."

"Why not dip him in boiling oil once or twice?" some one asked, and the victim trembled.

"Take him to the place of darkness until the question can be discussed," Billy commanded, and he was instantly obeyed.

When Reuben had been conducted from the room the "members of the order" gathered around their leader; but many were of the opinion that the joke had been carried far enough, besides the sport was beginning to grow tiresome.

"It's too early to let him go," Billy objected.

"He's had enough for one spell; we can finish to-night. Suppose he should take it into his head to make a complaint?"

"Well, such things have been done here before."

"That is true; but you must remember we took his money under false pretenses, and that comes near being a serious matter."

"He ought to pay a good deal more than that for being so terribly green," Billy replied, but he understood that some of his companions were a trifle nervous regarding what had been done, and agreed to postpone the sport.

Mounting the throne, he cried, loudly:

"Let the weak-kneed member from Maine be brought before us."

Reuben was led in, looking more assured. The wounds did not pain him as he thought they should have done, and he had begun to regret having said anything offensive to the master of such a supposedly powerful organization.

"It is not possible for us to decide upon the nature of your punishment," Billy said, gravely, "therefore, it is my order that you be reconducted to your room, there to remain until such time as we shall send for you. Remember that no guard will be placed over you; but terrible will be the result if you leave the apartment before having received our commands."

Before Reuben could reply, his eyes were bandaged and a couple of fellows hurried him away.

He was forced to take the same long journey, although his quarters were but a few yards away, and when, panting and breathless, he entered, one of his conductors said, sternly:

"Remember all that has been said to you, and try to

understand what might happen if you disobeyed the commands of our worthy master.”

“I’ll stay right here, and won’t speak to a living soul,” Reuben replied, in a faint voice.

“Then it will be all right, for I’m certain you can’t speak to a dead one,” and then the two hurried away, leaving the tired freshman to his own reflections.

His first act was to tear the bandages from his arm to ascertain how deep an incision had been made, and on finding only the scratch of a pin he began to be ashamed for having made such an outcry.

An examination of the supposed brand resulted in the same knowledge, and he said to himself:

“I don’t know how those fellows managed to make it feel as if I was in so much pain; but this thing is certain: I’ve made a big fool of myself. I suppose they are all in the lodge room laughing at the way I acted.”

In this last supposition he was correct, and a high time the fellows were having at his expense.

Billy received unlimited praise because of his skillful manner of devising and carrying out the initiation ceremony, while the majority of the party were beginning to think it might be as well to resume the sport later.

“We’ll fix him up this evening,” Billy said, “and then we’ll let him understand that the dean wants to make an apology.”

“Don’t go too far in that direction,” the more cautious ones advised; but the others insisted that the affair should be finished in a proper manner.

Plain Reuben was very careful to obey the orders given

by the master of the "lodge." He remained in his room a willing prisoner, not so much as going for anything to eat, and the hours passed slowly and wearily, without bringing him a single visitor.

When evening came he was thoroughly tired and sleepy. Owing to the fact of his having waited so long for the dean on the previous night, he had had but little rest, and by nine o'clock it seemed almost impossible to keep his eyes open.

It might be infringing the rules to go to bed before being "tucked up," but it could not be helped, and he yielded to the overpowering desire.

Sleep came very quickly and in a few moments his loud breathing told that he was oblivious to everything around him.

This was the time for which Billy and his fellow-conspirators had been waiting. They felt positive he would do exactly as he had done, and at short intervals a messenger was sent to listen at the door of the room.

When the report came that Plain Reuben was in the land of Nod, fully twenty young gentlemen stole softly to the former's room, opened the door cautiously, and, without making noise enough to disturb the sleeper, began removing all the lighter articles of furniture.

Every thing which could be taken out was carried to the farther end of the corridor, where it was piled up, and then Billy began the most delicate portion of the work.

Piece by piece he deftly pulled the bedclothing off, his companions waiting outside lest their suppressed breath-

ing should give the alarm, and whenever the freshman from Maine showed signs of being disturbed, Billy ceased operations to wait patiently until the victim was quiet once more.

It was a long task, owing to the frequent interruptions, but finally accomplished, and Plain Reuben was slumbering on a bed from which even the pillows had been removed.

Billy only waited long enough after this to make certain no matches had been left in the room, and then joined his companions in the hall.

“It won’t be a great while before he awakens, for it must be pretty cold in there, and we can afford to stay here a few minutes for the sake of the sport. How he will rave!”

The conspirators remained perfectly quiet during the next quarter of an hour, and then their patience was rewarded by hearing a rustling from the inside, as if some one was moving about on the bed.

There was an exclamation of surprise, and a jar as the freshman from Maine leaped to the floor.

“What has happened to the blamed things?” he asked himself, angrily. “I’m blest if I can find even the sheet. Where are the matches? I thought there were plenty here when I went to bed.”

Those in the hallway could hear their victim moving around rapidly, and then came the sound of a window-shade being pulled up.

A moment of silence, and then the exclamation:

"Well, I'll be jiggered!"

After that a deep silence reigned.

Plain Reuben was beginning to suspect the truth of the matter, and Billy motioned for his companions to follow him downstairs.

CHAPTER X.

REUBEN'S BASEBALL GAME.

During the few hours he had been in New Haven, Reuben Green had had a large and varied amount of experience.

He was beginning to understand that his fellow-students were amusing themselves at his expense, and, unsophisticated though he had shown himself to be, he had a very good idea of paying them back in their own coin.

As a matter of course, the theft of the bedclothing and furniture told that he was being initiated into the customs and sports of college life, if nothing more, and he muttered to himself as he searched for something with which to cover his shivering body:

"It's no use to get mad, for that would only make a bad matter worse; but I reckon I've had initiations enough to last me through this term, and it's time to put a stop to the fun."

He preferred to suffer from the cold rather than search for the articles which had been carried away, for he did not wish to give the practical jokers another laugh at his expense, therefore he remained in the now cheerless room with a pair of curtains as the only protection against the night air.

It was not possible to sleep very much after this, and

the freshman had ample opportunity to review in his mind the incidents which had followed one another so rapidly since his arrival at Yale.

Before morning he knew, or believed he did, very much more than on the night previous, and the conclusions he arrived at were near the truth.

"The only thing for me to do is to get square with those fellows, and I'm going to try mighty hard to do it."

At an early hour next morning he was out looking for his goods, which were found with but little difficulty, owing to the fact of their having been packed up at one end of the corridor, and he put in an hour of hard work returning them to their proper places.

This done, and his toilet made, Plain Reuben sauntered out to meet those for whom he had furnished so much amusement.

The first acquaintance he met was Billy, who had risen unusually early for this especial purpose, believing the freshman would pour a long account of his troubles into any sympathizing ear.

In this, however, the arch-conspirator was woefully mistaken.

Reuben appeared in the most amiable mood, and instead of referring to the events of the previous night, began to ask concerning the different buildings of the college.

"I heard you were admitted to one of our swellest societies yesterday," Billy said, with an assumption of carelessness.

"You ought to know, since you were the party who so kindly arranged it for me."

"Oh, yes; but you can understand that in an influential order like that a fellow may be under discipline, and not allowed to attend the meetings."

"I am sorry you wasn't there," Reuben replied, with evident sincerity. "I would like to know what the fellows thought of me."

"I haven't seen any of them since daylight; but I fancy there was no question about your getting through all right."

"I suppose not. I am going to call on the dean this morning. At what time had I better go?"

"At any hour before eleven o'clock. Do you intend to make a fuss because you wasn't tucked up in bed?"

"I reckon the letter I wrote will answer every purpose."

"But you mustn't let a thing like that pass unheeded. Remember that the other young gentlemen attending this venerable temple of learning look to you for the upholding of the dignity of your position."

"That will be all right; there's plenty of time, and I want to come up for examination again."

"What's that for?"

"It may be I can give a better definition of the thusness of the why than I did before."

There was a peculiar expression on the freshman's face as he spoke, and Billy began to have a very clear idea that the young gentleman from Maine was awakening to the true condition of affairs; but yet he was not disposed

to let the victim slip through his fingers so soon if it could be avoided.

"I suppose you play baseball," he said, carelessly.

"I did some last year."

"How would you like to have a game this afternoon?"

"First rate."

"Where do you play?"

"I have always caught, and would rather be there than anywhere else; but I reckon you have a catcher."

"That is just the man we need. Be ready at four o'clock, and we'll give you a chance."

Reuben promised to be on hand at the appointed time, and then hurried away, for he did not care to let Billy know positively that he had "tumbled" to his game.

After this interview the conspirator was in high glee, calling upon Roy and several other intimate friends to announce what he considered good news.

"I think Plain Reuben is uncorking both himself and us, for he acted this morning as if he was beginning to cut his eyeteeth," Billy said; "but we've got one more show at him."

"Don't you think we've given him a pretty stiff dose already?" Roy asked.

"Yes; but if he's ready to take any more it would be cruel not to give him the chance."

"Well, what have you got in the wind now?"

"He claims to know baseball pretty well, and wants to catch. Now, I propose to get up a scrub game this afternoon, and let you pitch for his team. Send in a

few of your hot ones, and I fancy he'll get all that's needed before the first inning is ended."

Roy no longer questioned whether Plain Reuben should be spared further trouble. This would not be a practical joke, but something which was perfectly legitimate, and he replied, with a hearty laugh:

"If he wants any of that sport, it shall come fast and thick. When a fellow is such a fool as to run up against us at ball, he ought to be given a lesson. The idea of that freshman thinking he can catch!"

"Don't spare him. Never mind about the game, so long as you can give him a dose."

"Don't worry about that. I'll promise plenty of fun, and if he catches more than ten minutes, it'll be necessary to bring me back on a shutter."

Roy was very confident as to his ability to make the new freshman "sick," and Billy counted on no end of fun before sunset.

He spent all his spare time notifying his friends of what was to be done, and there was every indication that the first game of the season would be witnessed by a large number of students.

In the meanwhile Reuben was doing what he should have done on the day previous—asking at headquarters for information.

The result of his inquiries was that he learned how far he had been victimized, and this only served to give him a greater desire to pay the debt.

So far as the ball game was concerned, he had no idea that his fellow-students anticipated sport at his expense,

but fancied that the invitation had been extended in good faith for the purpose of having a game, and nothing more.

When the appointed hour arrived, Billy had both teams made up, and since the only purpose was to have fun with the freshman from Maine, his opponents went to the bat, leaving him to make good his assertion that he could catch.

Billy generously supplied his intended victim with all that might be necessary in the way of an outfit, and led him to his position, as Roy went into the box.

"Now, Reuben, look out for yourself!" Billy whispered, warningly. "There are some mighty good players on the other team, and it would come tough if we lost the first game, for the regular nine is always selected from these trials, and a position on the university team is something that's not to be sneezed at."

"I'll do the best I can," Reuben replied, modestly, "but tell the pitcher to put them in rather quiet until I get accustomed to his delivery."

"I'll attend to that," and Billy walked over to the box, where he whispered to Roy: "He's getting nervous already, so break him up as soon as you can, and then we'll have a decent game."

"Play ball!" the umpire shouted, and Reuben assumed a most awkward-looking position, which caused the spectators to roar with mirth.

Roy's first delivery was a "ball," for he thought more of the catcher just then than he did of the fellow at the bat, and the leather sped through the air like a cannon ball.

Plain Reuben stepped aside, allowing it to pass him, and Roy's face lighted up, as he believed he had frightened the freshman at the first attempt.

Another hot "ball" followed, and Reuben pursued the same tactics, thereby affording the spectators no slight amount of sport.

A "strike" was next in order, and the batsman caught it for two bases, the shortstop fumbling it unmercifully, because, like all the others, he could see only the new catcher.

Now Reuben moved nearer the plate, and Billy whispered to him:

"Look out for yourself; that fellow can steal more bases than anybody you ever saw."

The freshman made no reply; his eyes were fixed on the pitcher, and, instantly the ball was delivered, the runner started, believing Reuben would not dare to catch it.

In this he was mistaken, however, for the freshman from Maine stood up to his work nobly, taking a hot one as if accustomed to such things, and sending it to third with an accuracy of aim which surprised the baseman so much that he came near fumbling it.

The spectators did not laugh now, but looked at each other in a curious fashion, as if asking whether or not they hadn't made a big mistake.

Roy was disappointed and angry.

After allowing the first two to go by him, Reuben, according to his calculations, should have missed this one.

All present knew by the pitcher's actions that he was about to redouble his efforts; but he expended his strength

in vain, for Reuben allowed the ball to strike the netting. Since the runner had been put out, there was no necessity for his working so hard, and by this time some of the lookers-on began to say to themselves that perhaps he was not so green at the business as had been supposed.

Now it was Roy's turn to get rattled, and he gave the batsman an easy one, which was accepted, but proved to be foul, and Plain Reuben had the leather when it fell.

He alone had put two opponents out, and matters began to look serious for those who had come simply to laugh at the fellow from Aurora, Maine.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SLUGGING MATCH.

Billy was particularly distressed because Plain Reuben was making such a good showing.

He had arranged the game simply for the purpose of having fun with the freshman, and it was mortifying, to say the least, to have him display any skill.

"It's only chance," he said, as he went to the box to console Roy. "He can't do it again, so rush him for all you are worth."

"If he shows up as he started, there won't be much chance of my rushing, unless it is to hold my own."

"If you lose your courage, of course the whole snap will be over; but there's no reason for getting downhearted. You're the best pitcher here, and it'll be strange if you can't down a countryman like him."

Reuben had no suspicion of the reason why he had been allowed to catch the first game of the season, nor was he conscious of having done anything to either surprise or disappoint his companions.

He was simply playing ball the best he knew how, and, in his mind, he had done nothing more than would any one else under the same circumstances.

Fortunately for Roy's peace of mind, the third man flew out to shortstop, and the side was retired.

According to Billy's programme, Reuben was first at the bat, and the pitcher announced his intention of striking him out at once; but this plan also proved to be a failure.

Reuben caught the leather for three bases, and stole home through a wild throw by the left-fielder.

"Well, say, fellows!" Billy cried, as the freshman crossed the plate with the swiftness of a deer. "It strikes me that we've picked up the wrong party this time. Plain Reuben may be mighty green about some things, but he surely knows how to play ball."

It was no longer possible to fancy Reuben's work was the result of an accident. There could be no question but that he was the equal, if not the superior, of any man on either team, and the spectators cheered him to the echo.

"Say, where have you been playing?" Roy asked, as the new catcher modestly seated himself on the extreme end of the bench.

"Only down in Maine. We don't have any very great games there, but we work mighty hard."

"I should say they'd have to, if all are like you."

"I reckon you'd find plenty who'd play clean around me without half trying."

By this time both nines were working. The freshman's example had aroused enthusiasm, and, instead of remaining in the field simply to see him make a booby of himself, they used every effort to win the game.

It is unnecessary to go into the details of the scrub match.

It is sufficient to say that Plain Reuben sustained his reputation to the end, and, when the last inning was over, with him among the victors, the students yelled themselves hoarse in trying to express their approbation.

"I reckon I'm evening things a little," the young gentleman from Maine said to himself as his companions gathered around with congratulations. "Now, if I can get one chance at Billy, I'll be mighty nigh the top of the heap."

Upon this evening Reuben received several invitations to call upon the different students; but he accepted none, alleging as excuse that it was necessary for him to study.

He agreed, however, to pay the visits later in the week, and it is safe to say that he was unmolested during the following twelve or fifteen hours.

"You have lost your victim, Billy," one of the students said, laughingly, when he met the arch-conspirator after the game. "Plain Reuben has cut his eyeteeth."

"That remains to be seen. I don't give up quite so easy; but I'm willing to admit that things will have to be worked with more skill. I owe him one for playing ball as he does without giving me an inkling of what it was possible for him to do."

"You wouldn't have believed anything he said, so what's the use of kicking? It's a clear case of the biter getting bit, and the best plan for you to pursue is to let him alone from this time out."

"And that is exactly what I sha'n't do. Wait a while until he is off his guard, and I'll show you some more fun."

"Be careful it don't turn out as the game did."

"I'll be better posted the next time," Billy replied, as he walked away.

The fact that he had not succeeded in his purpose made him provoked, and he, like Reuben, was intent on studying up some scheme whereby his prestige as a funmaker could be regained.

During the next twenty-four hours the Maine freshman remained hard at work, and those who called at his apartments found it impossible to gain admittance.

He honestly confessed it was necessary he should study in order to pass the required examination, and those with whom he talked were free to admit that he improved very decidedly upon acquaintance.

Billy made it his especial business to visit Plain Reuben at short intervals, in order to learn how he was feeling in regard to the jokes which had been played upon him, but gained very little information.

The freshman treated him as a friend, but did not attempt to share any confidences, and the leader in the initiatory ceremonies was rather uncomfortable in mind regarding Reuben's reticence.

"He's just one of those sort of fellows who can wait till his turn comes, and then jump in hot," he said, in strictest confidence, to Roy. "I'm willing to own that I don't feel right easy in mind about him, and shall keep my eyes open mighty wide from now until he makes some kind of a move."

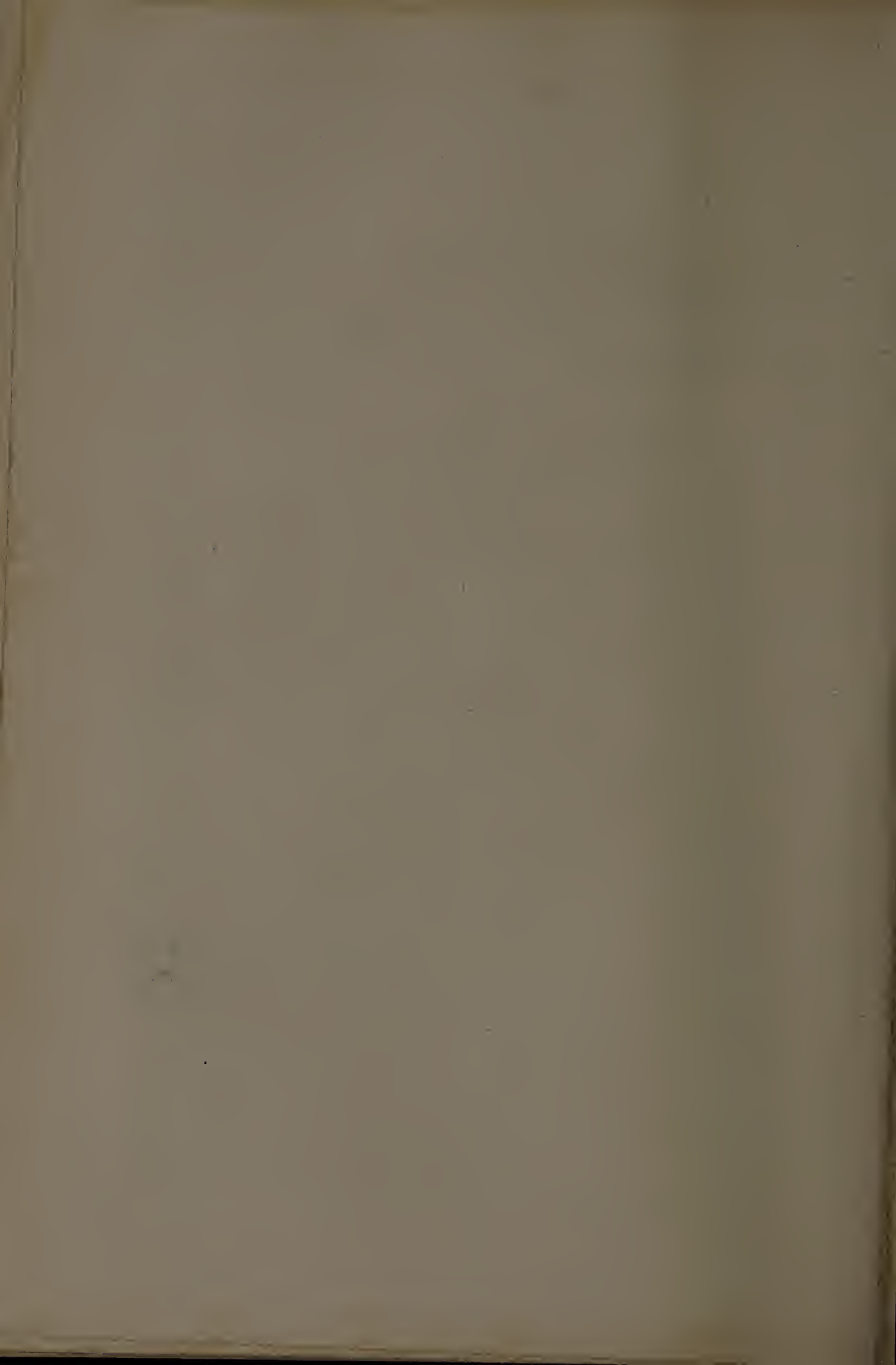
"Getting frightened, eh?"

"Not exactly that; but it would be turning the tables



“Reuben struck out wildly, hitting the astonished visitor on the nose.”

(See page 91)



with a vengeance if he should get the best of me some day, after all the sport I've had at his expense."

"It would be a righteous judgment."

"That is true, but I would like to escape, if possible."

It was on the second night after Reuben "went into his shell" that Jack Dudley, the umpire of the game which established the freshman's rating at Yale, asked a few friends to assist him in disposing of an elaborate layout, which he had ordered from the restaurant for the purpose of welcoming his friends in a proper manner.

Plain Reuben was among the invited guests, and had announced his intention of attending the impromptu party.

"Now, there's going to be no sport at his expense, save in a legitimate way," Jack said to Billy, in a determined tone. "A fellow who can play ball as well as he, shall be treated like a gentleman," and Billy promised to be on his good behavior during this particular evening, at least.

About twenty of the students gathered in Jack's quarters, which would have been uncomfortably filled with a trifle more than half that number, and Reuben was one of the earliest arrivals.

He was almost afraid this party was nothing more than a continuation of the sacred Gunjabee business, and proposed to be present before the others, in order to be on the alert against possible mischief.

In this case his precaution was needless, for Jack Dudley showed him considerably more attention than would have been the case had he not received so rough a hazing.

Others talked with him on the subject of ball, and sev-

eral suggested that he go in for a position on the university nine.

Reuben proved not to be half a bad fellow when there was an opportunity to show himself, and came out quite strong on the subject of athletic sports.

"Have you ever boxed any?" Billy asked.

"Only a little at home. Where I live there isn't much of a chance for instruction in anything of that kind, so I'm mighty green at it."

"Suppose you have a go with me? I'm nothing to brag on in that line, so you can't be very badly worsted."

"I'll try it; but the rest of the company won't get much sport out of seeing a fellow like me with the gloves on."

Now, Billy prided himself upon his knowledge of boxing, and prepared to "do up" the young gentleman from Maine in short order, as a slight means of getting even for the unusual amount of knowledge in regard to baseball which he had displayed.

Reuben was, or claimed to be, ignorant of the art of self-defense, save as it consisted in striking out rapidly and blindly, and before the first round was finished Billy gave him half-a-dozen stinging blows in the face, causing Jack to cry out, warningly:

"Look out, Moore! You have no right to aim for a place where he may be disfigured."

"I'll see to it that he don't have another chance," Reuben said, smarting under the sense of having been vanquished so easily, and then half-closing his eyes he swung his arms like a windmill, trusting to chance for hitting

the desired mark. There were some among the party, however who believed this ignorance to be assumed.

Billy had no difficulty in parrying the blows, and the freshman was working more energetically than ever, when the door was opened by one of the professors.

Reuben was wholly unconscious that any one had entered the room; he was thinking only of paying his adversary back with interest, and, while striking out wildly, hit the astonished visitor directly on the nose causing him to reel against the wall.

"Now I've got you!" he cried, thinking it was Billy whom he had dazed, and letting go both left and right in rapid succession.

The professor tried in vain to shield his face, but all to no purpose.

Jack Dudley leaped toward Reuben, but the latter did not heed his words of warning, and while the other members of the party were trying to pull the excited fellow away from the frightened professor both came to the ground together.

Even then Reuben got in a couple more blows before knowing that the bloody face belonged to one of the most dignified members of the faculty.

Then he was too much horrified to make the simplest form of an apology, but stood silent and motionless leaning against the wall, while two or three of the fellows assisted the professor in wiping the blood from his face.

"I came, Mr. Dudley," the injured man said, slowly, and in a grave tone, "in response to your request that we discuss the matter of which we were speaking yesterday.

Had I known how nearly your apartments resembled a bedlam, I should have insisted on your visiting me."

Before Jack could make any reply, the angry professor walked out of the room, and the guests stood gazing at each other in blank dismay.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DEAN'S DISGUST.

At first Reuben was inclined to think the young gentlemen were attempting to play another trick; but a scrutiny of the faces around him told that they were in great distress of mind.

"We shall get a wiggling for this, or I'm a Dutchman," Jack said, ruefully. "He'll certainly think we have been drinking, and so report. Who could be made to believe the truth of the matter? That we should mistake him for one of our crowd seems absurd."

"I didn't even see him," Reuben added, sorrowfully. "Billy came at me so savagely that I think I shut my eyes when I rushed at him. I only knew there was at last somebody in front of me to serve as a target, and let out for all I was worth."

"There can be no question about that, and I'll guarantee he carries the visible signs of your attentions for several days," Roy said; and then, as the comical side of the picture presented itself, he roared with laughter until the others were forced to join in the outburst.

"This isn't anything to make sport of," Jack replied, gravely, when something like order had been restored. "These are my rooms, and I am bound to be called upon for an explanation."

"Tell the story exactly as it is, and let it go at that," Billy suggested.

"I wish it would 'go at that,' but it won't. I sha'n't be believed, and it will be charged that I invited you fellows to a regular spree."

"We can prove that there is nothing here to drink," Reuben said, in the tone of one who feels confident he has the right of the matter.

"That is where you make a mistake, my dear freshy," Jack replied, as he pulled the cover from a hamper, revealing several dozen bottles of beer snugly packed in such a manner as to admit of the greatest possible number in the smallest space. "This is what I provided for our gathering, and, together with certain other liquids, we should have spent a very pleasant evening."

"Who knows the hamper is here?" Billy asked.

"That I can't say; but I should confess to the fact rather than tell a lie, if the question was asked. Therefore, under these circumstances, I want to know who would believe the injury done the professor was not the indirect result of too much stimulants?"

"The matter is in rather a bad shape, I'll admit," Billy said, gravely; "but since it seems absolutely certain we must bear the reproach of being under the influence of drink, when all hands are as thirsty as fishes, why not have the game also? It would be little less than a crime to waste this stuff, simply because Plain Reuben knocked the stuffing out of the professor, and I propose that the festivities continue as if nothing had happened. 'On with

the dance; let joy be unconfined,' should be our motto, and we'll let the morrow take care of itself."

"Why wouldn't it be a good idea for me to go the professor at once?" Reuben asked. "There's nothing like striking while the iron is hot."

"But it isn't so agreeable to strike while the professor is hot, and I can answer for it that he is at the present moment," Roy said, with a laugh. "Take my advice, Plain Reuben, and keep away until the swelling subsides from his nose."

"Never mind about that," Billy cried, impatiently; "the most important question before this meeting is as to whether we are to enjoy the feast, or leave it to waste its sweetness on the desert air."

"Blow the professor just now!" some one cried. "We can accomplish nothing by discussing either his condition or ours; therefore I move that we sample the good things provided by Jack."

Another seconded the motion, and Billy took it upon himself to declare the question carried unanimously.

"If it is the pleasure of the gentlemen to ignore, for the time being, our professor, who, while being disfigured, is still in the ring, then I declare this meeting opened in proper form," and Jack broached a bottle of beer in order to give the ceremony due force.

From that moment until a late hour in the evening, all present, including the freshman from Maine, discussed the "layout" provided by their host, and then, if the truth must be told, some of the company were rather the worse for having indulged so freely.

Conspicuous among these was Plain Reuben.

He had never been accustomed to such dissipation, and the result was that he became decidedly fuddled.

Some time before the others thought of bringing the meeting to a close his head buzzed like a top, and he forgot entirely what might be the outcome of the drubbing he had given the professor.

The remainder of the company in general, and Billy in particular, insisted upon doing especial honor to the young gentleman from Maine, and he was forced to drink a glass of beer with each fellow in the room.

As a matter of course, such a proceeding gave him very much more than his share, and it was difficult for him to distinguish the most prominent objects when Billy insisted on a speech.

"We have with us one of the bright and shining lights of the Pine Tree State," he said, "and it seems eminently proper he should give us his ideas of Yale, for it seldom falls to the lot of a person to have so much experience as has come to him."

"Hear! Hear! Plain Reuben! Plain Reuben!" came from all parts of the room, and the young gentleman thus addressed had no hesitation in responding to the call.

"I feel that my friend is right," he said, speaking so readily and distinctly as to surprise the others, who fancied he had arrived at that point where the tongue refuses to obey the dictates of the brain. "I should return thanks for what has been done in my behalf. I understand quite as well as any one else does that I am as green as my name implies; but, thanks to the strenuous

exertions of my very good friend, Mr. William Moore, I am rapidly learning what may be expected by those who have an idea they should apply to outsiders for information. I received more than I asked for; but there will ever remain in my memory the pleasing fact that I am probably the only regularly-initiated member of the sacred order of the Gunjabee, and probably shall ever remain alone with that proud distinction. Mine only are the horrors of the Ramadan, and I am the first and last to know what may result from having incurred the displeasure of the god or goddess, as the case may be."

As Reuben paused for breath a mighty shout went up from the audience; they were fast learning that he was a fellow to be cultivated, rather than made a butt for jests, and Billy's face grew red, because of the covert reproach in the sportive words.

"Now, 'young gentlemen,' " Reuben continued, when the tumult had partially subsided, "I do not wish to occupy the time of this honorable company when there are so many speakers more able than I who will address you. Besides, I am a member of the fence committee, to see how long the next candidate for honors shall sit there while his five dollars is being spent, and have also promised to carry the station agent's liver back to him as soon as it can be cleaned; consequently you must excuse me from saying anything more."

Reuben sat down amid the greatest applause, and there was not a student in the room, with the possible exception of Billy, who would not have voted that he was a jolly good fellow.

It had cost the freshman from Maine considerable mental effort to make this speech unflinching, for the beer had thickened his tongue to such an extent that at one time he doubted if it would be possible to continue without exposing the fact that he was rather the worse for having drunk so much.

Billy seemed to think it incumbent on himself to make some reply, and he arose to his feet after a slight struggle, to say:

"Gentlemen: It has given me great pleasure to listen to the remarks of our particular friend, Plain Reuben from Aurora, for I have an indistinct idea that some of them refer directly to me."

"I did not so intend them," Reuben hastened to say.

"Then I must explain that what I have done in your behalf has been at a great expense of time and labor. If I failed to accomplish my purpose it was from lack of ability rather than indolence. I recognized you as one whom we would delight to honor in our own peculiar way, and am proud to say the other young gentlemen assisted me nobly in my purpose."

Billy hesitated, hardly knowing how to defend himself gracefully from the attack made in such a friendly manner, and Jack interrupted him laughingly.

"Better keep quiet, old man. There doesn't seem to be any way out of this for you, save by silence. If Plain Reuben has tumbled to the racket, and is content to let the matter drop in the manner his speech would seem to indicate, you should accept the situation as gracefully as

possible, for the tables have been turned with a vengeance."

Billy sat down.

After this the fun grew fast and furious.

Every one recognized the fact that Reuben had shown himself a fellow of considerable spirit, and one who would not be far behind the foremost when he should have been fully educated in some of the peculiar methods employed by his fellow-students.

Billy, who counted on seeing his former victim fall before the deep draughts of beer, succumbed himself, and laid down on the floor with his head under the table, where it was protected from the shots aimed at it when biscuit or fruit was the ammunition used.

Roy felt very uncomfortable in the region of his stomach, as could be told from the expression on his face when Jack suggested that he try one of the cigars. He also had been so busily engaged watching the freshman from Maine that he paid little attention to his own condition until it was too late to draw back.

Several others of the "young gentlemen" were in a more or less troubled bodily state, and were disposed in very odd attitudes around the room when the door was suddenly opened, and no less a personage than the dean himself entered.

During the space of fully two minutes he stood silent and motionless, surveying the scene, and then Billy cried in anything rather than a steady voice:

"Say, ole man—ole man—say, we haven't heard—you know—— What makes you—you stand there like a—

a—a—a monkey, eh? Why don' you git a move on yourself?"

The dean looked with disgust on the practical joker, and then, assuming much the same attitude as that of the professor after the blood had been wiped from his face, he said, gravely:

"Mr. Dudley, since you preferred to live on the college domains, you must have understood that you were amenable to the rules, and under those circumstances I shall expect, both from you and your guests, some explanation of this scene and the outrage which has previously been committed."

Then the dean left the room.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN DISGRACE.

That the young gentlemen who attended Mr. Jack Dudley's party were in deepest disgrace with the college authorities, there could be no doubt.

In the first place, they—or, rather, Mr. Green—had flogged the professor, and if they hoped to cry that it was a singular mistake rather than the result of drunkenness, this last plank was knocked from under their feet.

The dean himself had visited the apartments at a moment when he could not fail to see the condition in which some of the party had placed themselves, and no excuses which they might make would be received.

Mr. Green felt this more keenly than did any one else, for it was his first experience at such a place, and he felt reasonably certain he would be sent home, even before he had had an opportunity to begin the collegiate course.

Despite the amount of beer he had allowed himself to be beguiled into drinking, the dean's visit drove from his head everything, save the probable outcome of the whole matter, and already could he picture his return to Aurora as an expelled student.

"We sha'n't gain anything by sitting here mooning over the affair," Jack said, after a long and painful silence.

"Something must be done, and the question is what defense can we offer?"

"I don't see that there is any to be made," Billy replied, gloomily.

"But we have got to call upon the dean, and it won't pay to go there like a lot of mummies."

"If your imagination is so vivid that you can find any extenuating circumstances in the affair, take charge of the business, and the rest of us will back you up; but my idea is that the wisest course would be to admit that we had no defense."

"Why, Billy, have you lost your grip as badly as that? I thought you'd be the last to give in."

"So I should if there seemed to be any show of pulling through; but I'm afraid we'll only make a bad matter worse by trying to crawl out of it."

"I am the one who has done the most mischief, for I slugged the professor, so I ought to try my hand at a defense," Reuben said, boldly.

The others looked up in surprise that the freshman should voluntarily take upon himself the disagreeable task, and more than one gave vent to a sigh of relief.

"How do you propose to fix it?" Jack asked, curiously.

"By telling just how it all happened, and if the story isn't believed it won't be our fault."

"But what about the stuff to drink, which the dean saw scattered around, to say nothing of the decidedly inebriated condition in which he found several of us?"

"In that case the truth will surely be believed, for he has the best of proof."

"And you are willing to represent all hands?"

"That's what I said."

"Well, you're a brick!"

Reuben did not seem to think he was about to do anything which called for praise, and it was decided by all present that he should represent them on the following morning.

Then, not being in the mood for continuing the interrupted festivities, the young gentlemen sought their respective rooms with many fears as to what the morrow had in store for them.

None of his companions of the evening previous saw Plain Reuben until the next day at noon, and then he wore such a troubled look there could be no question but the interview with the dean had been held.

Billy, Jack and Roy were the first who met him on the campus, and the former asked, eagerly:

"Did you see his jags?"

"Who?"

"His jags, the dean."

"I have just come from there."

"Judging by appearances, you didn't have a very pleasant call," Jack suggested, with a faint smile.

"That's just the size of it. He listened to all I had to say, and then sent for the professor so I could apologize to him."

"How did the old duffer look?" Billy asked, laughing heartily, despite his troubles, as he thought of the freshman attacking the dignified gentleman.

"As if he had been out pretty late last night. One of

his eyes is blackened, and his nose might be taken for a small-sized beet."

"Did you apologize?"

"Of course. He was bound to accept it; but snorted around considerable as if he didn't believe a word I was saying. Then he went out, and I waited to hear what the dean thought of the matter."

"Well?" Jack asked, eagerly, as Reuben paused.

"Well, I didn't hear. He said he would 'communicate' with us later, and I reckon it means I shall be invited to toddle off to Aurora, for it isn't likely he'll stand very much from a fellow who has but just entered the college on a pretty scaly examination."

"He must expel the whole of the crowd or none, so you have the satisfaction of knowing you won't be alone in your trouble," Jack said, with a sigh. "I expect it will amount to that, and it's going to be pretty tough on all hands."

Billy was a fellow who never allowed anything, however serious, to worry him very long at a time, and his night's rest had put a different complexion on the matter so far as he was concerned. He said, jauntily:

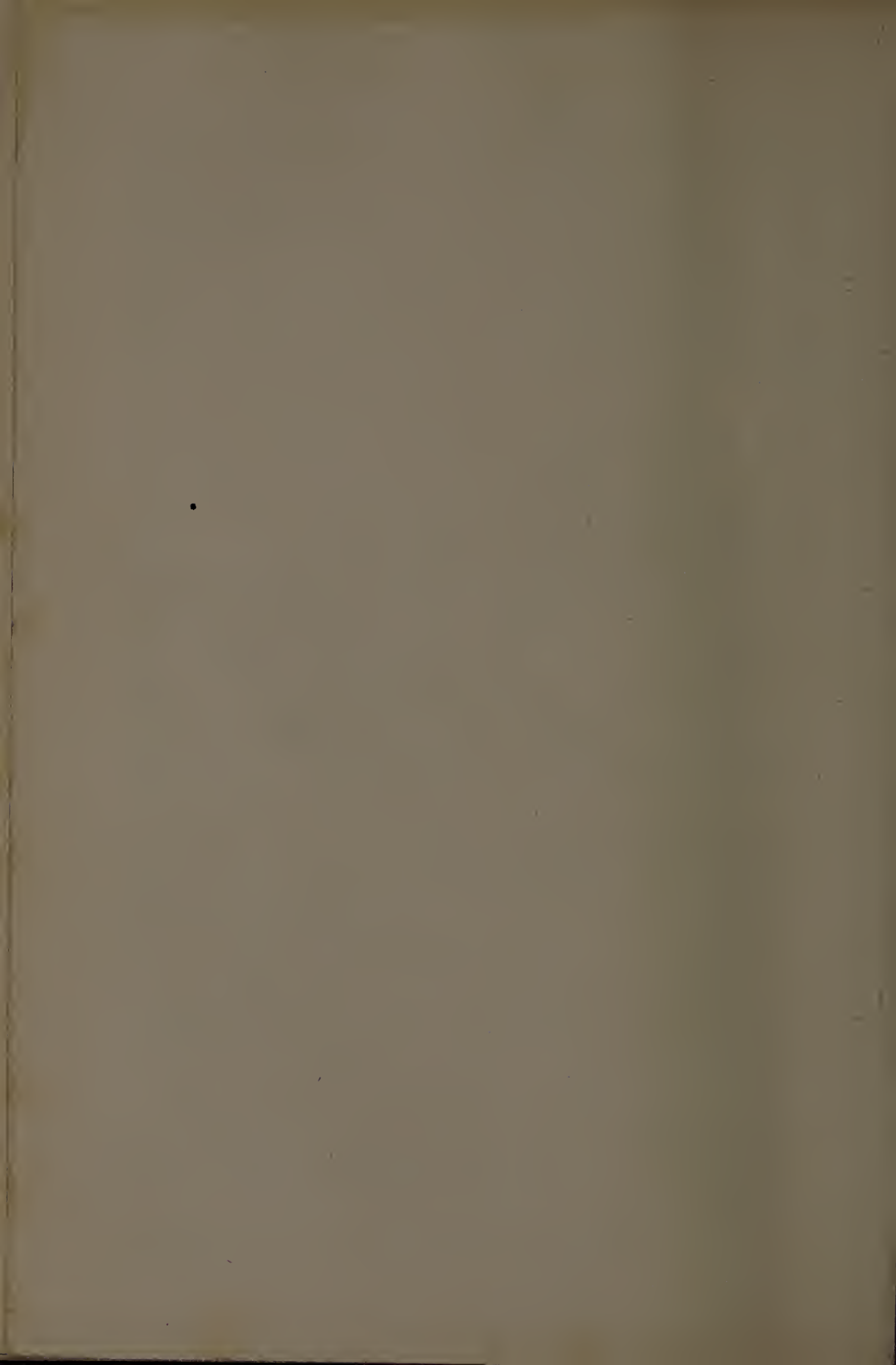
"I suppose his jags can do exactly as he pleases, and if we should fuss from now till doomsday it wouldn't change the position of affairs. We're in disgrace, and I fancy won't be called upon for study before the royal decision has been made known, so let's go down to the boathouse. A good pull will brace all hands up."

The others were not in the mood for study, and the suggestion was acted upon without discussion.



“There is a smothered scream and a loud splash.”

(See page 107)



"Can Plain Reuben row?" Roy asked.

"I never have, for you see there isn't any river or even a pond near Aurora," that young gentleman replied; "but I've seen the fellows at Bangor, lots of times, and am sure I won't be troubled to get the hang of it."

No one thought it necessary to explain that there was quite a difference between pulling an ordinary boat and a scull, therefore the freshman continued confident in his ability to hold his own among the party, until he saw the craft he was expected to use.

It was a single scull, and Jack said, as he pointed it out to the novice:

"Be careful at first, and you'll soon tumble to the trick. Can you swim?"

"Not a stroke."

"Well, it doesn't matter very much, for we'll keep close to you in case of an accident."

It wasn't very encouraging to speak as if an accident was liable to occur, before he had so much as gotten into the craft, and it tended to make Reuben nervous as he made ready for the alleged pleasure.

"I'll hold her steady while you get in," Jack said, as he launched the scull, and the freshman stepped aboard gingerly, hardly daring to breathe lest she should be overturned.

"Here are the spoons, and it would be a good idea to sit still a few minutes to get acquainted with the craft before attempting to pull."

"I might sit here till Gabriel sounded his trump, and not be any better acquainted with the thing than I am

now," Reuben replied, mournfully. "If a fellow should be so careless as to hold a cigar in the corner of his mouth she'd upset."

"It isn't quite so bad as that, and you'll soon feel at ease."

The freshman shook his head mournfully, but made no other reply.

The remainder of the party launched their crafts, and began to circle around with so much ease that Reuben's courage revived wonderfully.

"It looks slick enough, and I reckon I ought to be able to do it," he said to himself, and commenced to pull out from the landing stage.

The first half-dozen strokes sent him so much farther away than he had expected that it seemed certain the "hang of the thing" had already been gained, and immediately his desire was to race with his friends.

"You're getting along first rate," Billy cried, encouragingly. "It won't be a great while before you can hold your own with any of us green hands."

"I'd like to try you now."

"Better wait a while. After two or three days, in case his jags allows us to stay, we'll have a spurt."

"Let's have one whack at it now."

"Very well; but remember that I gave you fair warning."

"Oh, that part of it is all right," Reuben replied, with confidence, as he rowed alongside Billy. "It's only a question of strength after a fellow gets started, and I've got as much muscle as you."

There was a twinkle of satisfaction in Billy's eyes as he prepared for the race.

Here was a chance for sport without an opportunity of having it said he had played any tricks on the young gentleman from Maine, and he cried, in a fatherly tone:

"Hold yourself steady, and pull as hard as you please, for I shall do my best."

Reuben looked around to assure himself his intended course was clear, and then bent his body to the task.

The spoons proved more inconvenient to handle than he had anticipated, and his efforts caused the scull to move about in the most erratic fashion.

"That fellow is going overboard," Jack said to Roy, when he saw what was being done. "Keep close alongside him, and I'll go back for a boat; since he can't swim, it would be hard work to get him ashore in a scull."

Plain Reuben presented a most comical spectacle as he struggled with the craft and the oars.

Billy allowed him to think he was holding his own in the race, by hanging back a little, and he pulled the best he knew how on a zigzag course.

The prospect of defeating Billy caused the freshman to grow more bold, and before Jack could carry out his intention of coming upon the scene with a boat, there was a smothering scream, a loud splash, and Plain Reuben was struggling in the water.

In an instant both Billy and Roy were at the scene of the disaster, and the half-drowned freshman seized the former's scull, attempting to clamber inboard.

"Look out there!" Billy shouted, as he tried to back off.
"You'll have me over!"

The warning was disregarded, and, as a matter of course, there could be but one termination to such a proceeding.

The words were hardly spoken before Billy's craft turned turtle, and Roy saw Reuben making frantic efforts to seize the prow of his scull.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUT FOR A LARK.

Billy was fully occupied in taking care of his scull, and trying to prevent Reuben from floundering about near enough to be dangerous, therefore he could do nothing toward aiding in the rescue.

Roy was the only one upon whom the freshman could depend until Jack should arrive, and even he was rather timid about venturing within reach of those arms which were threshing the water so wildly.

“Now, don’t make a fool of yourself,” Roy cried, sharply. “If you capsize me there will be no one to help you, and you stand a good chance of being drowned. Get hold of the side of my craft; but don’t try to climb in, unless you want to make a terrible mess of it.”

Reuben ceased his struggles for an instant, and, as a matter of course, began to sink.

This alarmed him the more, and he paid no heed to the warning, but grasped the rail of Roy’s scull, throwing his entire weight upon it, with the natural result.

Roy could not prevent the catastrophe, and was flung almost directly on top of the frightened freshman.

“Now you have made a nice mess of it,” the former cried, angrily, as he ejected the water from his mouth. “Didn’t I tell you not to do that?”

"Don't let me drown! Please don't let me drown!" Reuben cried, piteously.

"Be quiet and have some sense about you; there's no danger if you don't lose your head."

"But I shall sink."

"Of course, you will while you fool around that way. Take hold of your scull in this fashion, and only bear weight enough on her to keep your head above the surface. She'll go down with you, if you try to pull your body entirely out of water."

Reuben tried to do as he was directed; but his fear was so great that he put too much upon the frail craft, and, quite naturally, failed in his purpose.

He alternately sank and rose again until he was in imminent danger of suffocation, and Billy shouted to Jack, who was now pulling toward the party:

"Hurry up, or Plain Reuben will drown himself, and it'll be a clear case of suicide, for he's doing his best to bring about such a result."

There was really need that help should arrive at the earliest possible moment, for the freshman was rapidly becoming exhausted, and at risk of being pulled under, Roy swam to his assistance.

"Take care of yourself!" Billy shouted, warningly, and the would-be life-saver succeeded in seizing the half-drowned boy by the back of his coat collar, thus preventing him from complicating matters by hampering the efforts of his rescuers.

Jack was now rowing at full speed, and in a few seconds was where he could aid Roy.

In a short time the half-conscious freshman was pulled in over the gunwale, the sculls were made fast astern, and the oarsmen returned to the boathouse after a decidedly inglorious outing.

Reuben had fully recovered when they reached the landing stage, and Billy said, laughingly:

"You ought to have taken my advice, and not tried to race until after more experience."

"I've had experience enough now, at all events, and don't need any more, for I'll give the fellow who catches me in another boat full liberty to thump my head," the freshman replied, ruefully.

"We shall see you pulling around here like an old hand at the business before it is too cold for such sport."

"Don't believe anything of the kind, for I know when I've had enough."

The party adjourned to Reuben's apartments after their wet clothes had been changed for dry ones, and there the freshman regained a portion of the spirits he had lost through the involuntary bath.

As a matter of course, the principal topic of conversation was as to what would be the result of the dean's deliberations, and before the four separated this was made known.

A carefully-worded letter addressed to Reuben, in his capacity as spokesman for the remainder of the party, announced the welcome intelligence that their transgression of the rules would be overlooked on this occasion; but that a repetition of the offense would bring the severest punishment in the power of the faculty.

"So we're to stay, and you won't visit Aurora as soon as we thought, Plain Reuben," Jack said, when the freshman finished reading the missive aloud.

"It's taken a big load off my mind, for I'd rather gone to the bottom this forenoon, than to toddle back and say I'd been expelled."

"It wouldn't be pleasant news for Matilda," Billy suggested.

"You can bet it wouldn't. Why, I don't believe she'd ever have spoken to me again."

"Well, so long as that fearful disaster is not likely to occur under the present condition of affairs, suppose we celebrate by going to Denny's for the evening? When the other fellows hear the result of his jags' deliberations they'll be only too glad to come up with sugar enough for their share of the supper. I'm in for having a swell layout," and Billy seemed like his old self once more.

"Haven't we had all the trouble that was necessary without hunting around for something else?" Reuben asked.

"There's precious little chance for a row while we're off the college grounds, and, besides, we're bound to have some kind of a celebration."

Roy and Jack shared Billy's opinion, therefore Reuben could do no less than bow to the will of the majority, and a supper was decided upon.

The other members of the company which had been at Jack's on the evening previous sauntered in one by one to hear the news, and it was a very jolly gathering as they

learned their escapade was not to have a more serious termination.

Every one was in favor of carrying out Billy's plan, and at an early hour the entire party adjourned to Denny's, where all the good things at his command were ordered.

Such evenings are generally passed in a merry fashion; but this was an unusually happy occasion because of the relief which all felt, and the festivities were prolonged until a very late hour.

Beer had circulated, although not too freely, and none of the party would have said he drank more than was good for him, yet at the same time all were ripe for mischief, and on the way back to their rooms the temptation to have a little fun was not to be resisted.

A few of the tradesmen's signs were transposed in such a manner that at the grocery store was the legend: "French Millinery," and *vice versa*; but this was tame sport for Billy Moore, who suddenly proposed a very brilliant scheme as a *finalé* to the evening's amusement.

"Say, fellows, what do you think of rousing these old fossils here by rigging up a banner for the front of Osborn Hall?"

"What do you mean by that, and where can you get a banner at this time of night?" some one asked.

"I mean that we'll paint something like this on a square of canvas, and hang it directly over the entrance to the hall: 'Fossils for sale here. Apply to his jags, the dean.' Wouldn't that make a rattling among the dry bones?"

"Yes, and your own might do considerable shaking before the thing was ended. You can't get the banner, though, so that settles it."

"We'll see whether I can or not; but first say if you'll go into the scheme?"

No one offered any objection, and assuming that in this case silence meant consent, Billy continued:

"At the boathouse there is an old sail, about twenty by twelve feet. It won't be any job to get it out, and I'll answer for the paint and brush if you fellows wait here."

This was agreed upon, and Billy hurried away, returning twenty minutes later with the desired articles.

Reuben was a trifle doubtful about indulging in any pranks so soon after their fortunate escape; but he could hardly back out, having tacitly consented, and allowed himself to be led by press of numbers to the boathouse.

Here, as before, Billy was the leading spirit, and in a short time the canvas, together with as much rope as he thought might be needed, was in his possession.

To letter the square of cloth was a short task, for it was not essential very artistic work should be done, and when Billy finished his labors the following was the result:

FOR SALE!

Fossils Rather the Worse for Use.

No Reasonable Offer Refused.

Apply to

HIS JAGS, THE DEAN.

Apply early, for after procuring a supply of younger material the present assortment will be boiled down.

If the students had not been dining out, they would not have sanctioned or aided in such an insult to the faculty, for although a number were quite old, there was not one who deserved such an epithet.

But, feeling merry as they did, it seemed more like a lark than a deliberate insult, and no one thought of objecting.

The only question in the minds of the party was as to how the banner could be suspended, and this portion of the work Billy proposed to attend to in the same thorough manner as he had the manufacture of the sign.

"If Plain Reuben will come with me, I'll have it in position in less than half-an-hour," he said, looking inquiringly toward the freshman.

The young gentleman from Maine did not wish to take any active part in the matter, and was about to make some excuse, when Roy cried:

"Of course he'll help. We've seen enough of him to know that."

Reuben was ashamed to make any protest after such a flattering remark, and he followed Billy cautiously around the rear of the building to a back entrance, of which the arch-conspirator had, in some unaccountable manner, secured a key.

Billy opened the door, and the freshman, carrying one end of the banner, passed through, leaving the remainder of the party to await their reappearance.

A second door had a self-acting lock on the outside, and it was only necessary the spring of this should be pulled back,

Billy went in first, and, as Reuben followed, he whispered:

“Take mighty good care you don’t let that door close on us, or we shall be fastened in here without——”

He spoke too late.

Before the remark could be concluded the door swung back with a crash, and the mischief-makers were locked in the interior of the building.

CHAPTER XV.

IN A TIGHT BOX.

"Well, you have done it now if you never did before," Billy cried, in dismay, as the sharp clicking of the bolt told that they were prisoners.

"Isn't there any way out of this?" Reuben asked, in a voice which trembled severely.

"None that I know of."

"But how did you propose hanging the sign out?"

"By going through the window on to the ledge which runs around the first story of the building."

"Then I should think it would be an easy matter to get down from there."

"We'll go up, and you shall see how simple it would be. The architect had probably been a collegian himself, and knew exactly how the building should be arranged to prevent students from going in or out at their own sweet will."

Billy led the way up the broad stairs to the apartments above, and once there it was possible to raise a window without difficulty.

Reuben stepped on to a broad stone ledge and looked over.

Seeing him, his friends below gave vent to a whispered cheer, but he paid little heed to their applause.

One glance was sufficient to show that there was no hope of clambering down except by means of a ladder, and to jump would be at risk of one's life.

"Well, what do you think of it?" Billy asked ironically.

"We might as well be fastened inside as here, for even a monkey would have hard work to reach the ground."

"And yet it must be done somehow, or else we can make up our minds to go home for a protracted vacation," Billy said, musingly.

"What's the matter up there?" Jack asked in a low tone. "If you don't finish mighty soon some of the watchmen will be around."

"There'll be a good many come and go before we get out," Billy replied, in a mock mournful tone.

"What's the matter?"

"My respected friend, Mr. Plain Reuben, saw fit to let the door with a spring lock close just when we were on the wrong side, and the result is that we shall have plenty of time to finish our work, and be finished ourselves precious soon after sunrise."

"Are you certain there is no way of getting down?" Jack asked, anxiously.

"Positive. We are doomed to sit like a couple of geese with no means of getting down."

"I thought you could always get down from a goose, and since there are two of them, the article shouldn't be scarce," Roy suggested.

"Look here, Mr. Moody," Billy whispered, angrily, "I have often had occasion to reprimand you for the vile

habit of making puns ; but now if I could get hold of you it would be a struggle to the death, that your companions might be deterred from such questionable wit when a fellow is in so much trouble. I wish you were here."

"Well, I don't, and what's more, I can congratulate myself on being so far beneath you."

Billy shook his fist in impotent rage, and Roy danced a hornpipe for his amusement.

"Oh, stop your fooling," Jack whispered. "This is a mighty serious matter."

"You can bet it is, for Plain Reuben and myself," Billy said, emphatically.

"Haven't you got some rope?"

"About five feet, in two pieces, and that won't cut any great figure in lowering us to the ground."

"Hang out the banner and talk afterward," some one suggested, and Billy thought this a good idea.

"Why do you do it?" Reuben asked as he began the task. "It's bad enough to be caught up here doing nothing, but to have that thing on exhibition will make things worse than all else."

"You are right," and Billy ceased his work to whisper to Jack:

"We'd better drop this down, and let some of you fellows carry it away, for we mustn't be caught with it in our possession."

"That'll be all right, for I'm going to the boathouse for rope. Could you manage it with forty or fifty feet?"

"Yes, providing it's strong enough. Don't tempt us into breaking our necks."

Jack and a companion went off at full speed, and confident now that they would soon be released from the disagreeable position, Billy began the work for which he had come.

In ten minutes or more the canvas was hung where, as Roy said, a blind man could see it, and then nothing more could be done until Jack returned.

Reuben was crouching on the ledge thinking how foolish he had been to allow himself to be drawn into such pranks, when the crowd below suddenly began to disperse, each fellow running rapidly in a different direction.

"What's the matter?" he asked, in a tone incautiously loud.

"Hold your tongue," Billy whispered, hoarsely, pulling the freshman down beside him. "One of the watchmen is most likely coming, and the only chance we have of keeping out of sight is by lying flat on the ledge."

No further explanation was necessary to convince Reuben that he had come very near plunging himself and his companion into difficulty for the second time, and he obeyed the order, given thus gruffly, as quickly as possible.

Soon the footsteps of some one could be heard approaching slowly, as if he who caused them was in no particular hurry, and those in hiding hardly dared breathe lest they should be discovered.

It was the watchman beyond a doubt, and on arriving opposite the building he gave vent to a suppressed whistle expressive of surprise as the painted canvas was seen.

It seemed to Billy and Reuben, nervous as they were,

that the man must have stood fully ten minutes reading the inscription, although the time could not have been half as long, and then, to their great relief, he moved slowly on.

“Now every watchman on the grounds will be sent around, and we’ll be playing in big luck if we get away before daylight, no matter how much rope Jack succeeds in getting.”

“How many are likely to come?”

“I don’t know, but even two would be too many, and it’s safe to say there are at least three around the place.”

Reuben groaned.

“Howling won’t do any good now, and we’d better think that Jack will come in time, otherwise the minutes are certain to be very long and disagreeable.”

Reuben made no reply. He was reproaching himself for having done this thing after escaping from the other trouble so easily.

“It wouldn’t be any use to try to talk this thing off if we were caught,” he said, mournfully.

“The dean told you so.”

Then followed a long and painful silence, which was broken by the welcome sound of cautious footsteps approaching, and Billy ventured to peer over the ledge.

“They’ve come, and got the rope with them,” he whispered, triumphantly, rising to his feet, and then he added to Jack: “Hurry up, old fellow! One of the watchmen has been around here, and the others are bound to follow suit as soon as they know what has been done.”

"Stand by to catch," and Jack made half the rope into a coil ready for throwing.

"Let her come!"

Once, twice, three times was the cast made unsuccessfully, Reuben groaning aloud at each failure of Billy to catch it, and then the feat was accomplished.

"Open both windows; pass the bight around the framework, and slide down as quick as you can, for we've spent too much time here already," Jack cried.

It was not necessary to urge those on the ledge to make haste.

They knew the danger to which they were exposed only too well, and simply asked for an opportunity to escape.

"Go first, and I'll follow close behind," Billy whispered.

Reuben obeyed.

Three minutes later both were on the ground making remarkably good time toward their apartments, with Jack and his companion leading the way.

Those who ran from the watchman had not returned, and there was good reason to believe they would not, since there was nothing for them to do in the way of rescuing the self-made prisoners.

The fugitives were fortunate in meeting no one, and soon Reuben was in his room, where he had ample opportunity of reviewing his conduct.

Billy could not gain his apartment without risk of awakening some fellows who never took part in such

pranks; therefore he invited himself to sleep with the freshman, much to the latter's discomfort.

"It doesn't seem safe for you to stay away from your own quarters, for, of course, such a thing will look suspicious when matters are inquired into to-morrow morning, as they are certain to be."

"I can't help that; I don't intend to run the greater risk of giving the snap away to a lot of goody goodies, who might think it the proper caper to blow on me. If you are afraid I'll try some other fellow."

"Not a bit of it; you are welcome to stay here, but I couldn't help thinking that we might be asked why you didn't go to your own room."

"If that should be the case I could tell the truth, and say I preferred to remain here."

There was very little sleep for the practical jokers on this night.

Now that the matter was beyond recall, they began to realize more fully what might be the result of their sport, and the prospect was far from cheering.

Neither Billy nor Reuben ventured out until past eight o'clock, and before then Jack came to tell them that the banner had been removed.

"I heard one of the laborers say he had never known the dean to be in such a rage. Roy saw him crossing the campus, and says his eyes looked purple, he was so angry."

"Has he any suspicions as to who did it?"

"That's exactly what I'm trying to find out. I've just been talking with Professor Studious about it, and he

says it wouldn't surprise him if a whole class was suspended until the guilty ones came forward. He is almost frothing at the mouth, and you know a thing has to be mighty rough to stir old Studious up. Says it's an insult to every teacher in the college, and that those who have done such a thing must be found. You've been into a good many scrapes, Billy, and led others on; but this rather takes the cake."

"So I see," Billy replied, mournfully, "and I'll be mighty lucky if it don't take me."

CHAPTER XVI.

INITIATED BY THE SENIORS.

There was one peculiarity about Billy Moore which was observed even by those who knew him the least.

No fellow was so ready and willing to get into mischief as he, and none so repentant after the deed or deeds had been done.

Instantly one of his pranks threatened to give him trouble he was plunged in the slough of despond, and immediately he was extricated, either by his own or others' exertions, he would concoct another scheme which the most thick-headed fellow in college could feel positive must bring the perpetrators to grief.

On this occasion he was more despondent than ever before, and he had good cause, for if the faculty discovered who hung the banner on Osborn Hall expulsion would surely follow. Nothing could save the culprits from the punishment.

It was simply a repetition of the *finalé* to the last escapade, with the exception that Plain Reuben had no suggestions to make.

He saw no ray of hope, and looked upon his return to Aurora as a foregone conclusion.

Several others who had been concerned in the mischief dropped in to hear the latest news, and when each had

told what he knew regarding the movements of those in authority, Jack said, with a forced laugh:

"There's no use acting as if we were taking part in our own funerals. Whatever is coming can't be avoided by mooning around here like a crowd of mutes. Let's keep about our studies as if nothing had happened, otherwise we shall give the whole snap away without having once opened our mouths."

"Oh, yes, a fellow feels like playing goody, don't he, when he's expecting each minute to receive a polite invitation to walk up to the captain's office and settle, eh?" Billy asked, sarcastically.

"Perhaps he don't, but if the sensation is something unpleasant, he shouldn't take so much pains to get into a scrape. This is the sequel to one of your own smart tricks, and you ought to be the last to cry baby."

"I'm doing nothing of the kind, but it stands to reason I should feel anxious."

"Of course you ought, not only on your own account, but for Plain Reuben. After using him as a target for your jokes until the thing couldn't be worked any longer, you manage to get him into about as bad a scrape as any fellow could well be in, and when it's over, think solely of yourself."

"Do you know why I do that?"

"No."

"Well, it's because what may be done to him won't hurt him. I've got to take some of my own medicine, and it isn't pleasant to contemplate."

"It's no use to try to read you a lesson," Jack said, im-

patiently. "I don't want to see you fired; but I do hope you'll get taste enough to last you a few weeks, so we sha'n't continue this term in a regular stew as it has begun."

Reuben took no part in the conversation.

He understood that he must stand by himself without expecting any assistance from the fellow who had led him into the mischief, and the future looked very dark.

Just at this moment he thought more of Matilda than he did of how his parents might feel regarding his expulsion. She had been so proud because he was going to Yale, and it now seemed certain her pride was destined to have a fall.

One by one the party dispersed in order to act upon Jack's suggestion, and the freshman from Aurora was left alone.

He had no desire for breakfast.

Food just then would have choked him, and he vainly tried to find relief from his disagreeable thoughts by study.

The words danced before his eyes, the letters waltzing around until they formed the inscription which had been painted on the banner, and he could distinguish nothing else upon the printed page.

After an hour had been spent in this useless attempt to work he concluded to go out for a stroll about the town.

Almost anything would be better than sitting there with no other company than his own gloomy reflections,

and he went into the open air, unconsciously bending his steps toward the center of the city.

It seemed as if every person on the streets was talking about the insult which had been offered the faculty of the college, and Reuben realized before walking half a dozen squares, if, indeed, he had not done so already, the magnitude of the offense.

"I'm a goner," he muttered, and to avoid hearing more regarding the affair he returned to his room.

Here he remained during the entire day, receiving no callers save Billy, who simply looked in in a mournful way to ask if Reuben had heard anything new.

"All I know is what you fellows told me," the freshman from Aurora replied, with a sigh.

"Jack says both classes are to be suspended pending investigations."

"Then you and I ought to come out like men and own up," Reuben replied, emphatically. "When a fellow has got to go to the dough trough, the sooner it's over the better."

"Now don't make a fool of yourself, Freshy Green," Billy said, petulantly. "I ain't such an idiot as to confess before it's absolutely necessary."

"Suppose you were asked if you knew who hung the banner on Osborn Hall?"

"The question hasn't been put to me yet, and I won't fuss until it has."

Then, as if not liking the turn which the conversation was taking, Billy hurried away, and Reuben tried to decide as to what was the proper course for him to pursue.

Except during the time spent in getting supper, the disconsolate young gentleman from Aurora remained in seclusion until at about eight o'clock in the evening, when the sound of footsteps on the stairs told of approaching visitors.

"Those fellows are crazy to come around in crowds to talk this thing over," he said to himself. "It is dead certain somebody will get on to them if they hang together this way."

The door was opened without the formality of a knock, and to Reuben's surprise five fellows, each masked by a silk handkerchief tied around his forehead in such a manner that the ends might hang over the face, entered the room.

The Aurora freshman had already had sufficient experience to be able to determine the cause for this visit.

He who had been hazed almost continually since the hour of his arrival was to suffer yet more.

"Look here, I don't think this is a fair shake," he said, angrily, starting to his feet.

"What are you objecting to, young man?" one of the party asked gruffly, as he gave a signal which caused the others to suddenly seize Reuben by the arms, thus making it impossible for the boy to offer any resistance.

"I object to being picked up for a flat all the time. It seems as if you fellows had had enough of this kind of fun. Isn't there another freshman in the college you could try your hand on, and give me a rest?"

"You must be mistaken if you think we have paid you any attention before."

"But enough of the fellows have, and that ought to square things so far as I'm concerned."

"Perhaps the Juniors may have tried to help you along; but we are a delegation from the Seniors, sent for the sole purpose of making your acquaintance."

"Can't you do it without holding me in this fashion?"

"We only do it in order to place you more at ease," was the reply, and the words had hardly been spoken before those who held him lifted Reuben with a quick movement upon the table.

Then his arms were dexterously tied behind his back, and, leaning him against the wall, the visitors drew enormous pipes from their pockets, filling them with the rankest of tobacco.

Smoking was a vice to which Reuben was not addicted, and he viewed the proceedings with a lively sense of the discomfort about to be experienced by himself.

"We want you to distinctly understand that this is a friendly visit, intended as a means of putting you at your ease when you meet your superiors, the members of the Senior class," the spokesman said, as he lighted his pipe and puffed huge volumes of smoke in Reuben's face.

"I'm likely to be at my ease after you fellows get through curing me as they do herrings down our way," the victim replied, grimly.

"Very possibly. Now, to oblige us, will you please give your full name and address?"

Reuben understood that he should only make a bad matter worse if he refused to do the bidding of these masked visitors, and he answered, meekly:

“Now, Mr. Fresh Freshman, we wish to hear you sing, for there is nothing like music when one is enjoying the soothing fragrance of this Indian weed.”

“Are you particular as to the style of song?” Reuben asked, with a grin, as he did his best to prevent the smoke from entering his lungs.

“Please yourself in that matter.”

All five were now puffing away vigorously. One of the party had taken the precaution of closing the windows, and the room was already so nearly filled with smoke that Reuben could not see across it.

The victim waited only long enough to recover from a sudden fit of coughing, caused by the expertness of one of the visitors in sending the disagreeable vapor directly down his throat as he spoke, and then began, to the tune of “Old Hundred,” the verses so familiar to all:

Tobacco is a filthy weed,
Some say the devil sowed the seed, etc.

This he sang in the most doleful manner, and dodging from time to time as his visitors tried to fill his lungs with smoke.

“Don’t you know something a little more cheerful?” the spokesman asked when Reuben began to repeat the words for at least the tenth time.

“That’s the extent of my musical knowledge, unless you care to hear ‘Sandy, Will You Lend Me a Needle?’”

“Then stop and give us a speech; almost anything will be better than that howling.”

Reuben obeyed at once, kicking out with both feet to prevent his tormentors from coming too near.

"Gentlemen, for that is what I suppose you call yourselves——"

"Of course we do, and be careful not to forget that very important point."

"Gentlemen of the Senior class, it doesn't give me much pleasure to meet you this evening; but under the circumstances there is little use to kick, for——"

"Say, fellows, I'm done up," he said, interrupting the speech. "That nigger-head tobacco is too much."

His face told that he was sick, and the spokesman said, with an air of authority:

"Hang him out of the window a little while, and when he comes to a bit we'll not only have the rest of that speech, but put him through his paces in great style."

CHAPTER XVII.

REUBEN'S SPEECH.

Reuben was as sick as if he had been attempting to use one of the pipes; and it is not to be wondered at that his stomach revolted at the pungent blue clouds with which the apartment was filled.

His visitors understood from past experience what was necessary in such cases.

Without untying his hands, they carried him to the window, and there literally "hung him out," allowing his body to fall below the sill, while two of the party kept a firm hold of his feet.

In this position Reuben was upside down, and not many moments elapsed before it seemed as if every drop of blood had gone into his head.

The pain caused by this uncomfortable position was so great that for the time being the nausea was forgotten, and he yelled sufficiently loud to be heard all over the campus:

"Say! You fellows will finish me up if you keep me here very long."

"Do you feel better?"

"Do you fancy a fellow would feel very good hanging here like that turkey of mine, which some of you gentlemen so carefully dissected?"

"Haul him in, and we'll hear the remainder of the speech," the spokesman commanded, and Reuben soon found himself standing erect; but once inside the room the nausea assailed him again with redoubled force.

"Go ahead, and talk quick, for we'll soon have to drop you out," one of the party said, sharply, and, knowing full well that his tormentors would not desist until their programme was finished, Reuben obeyed.

"Gentlemen," he began, "it is possible that more may come from my mouth than will be agreeable; but if words fail me and my stomach takes up the business of the evening, remember that this was of your seeking rather than mine. So little accustomed am I to public speaking that I really feel uncomfortable both in mind and body, and would be perfectly willing to walk around the block or carry a trunk while either of you complete the task allotted to me. I don't claim to be an orator; but in my feeble, I might say sickly, way, I wish to express the pleasure I feel at having met such perfect gentlemen in this informal manner."

"Do you mean that as a slur upon us?" the spokesman asked, angrily, as Reuben reeled toward the window, leaning far out to get a breath of pure air.

"How could I mean other than what I have said?" the victim asked, as if in surprise. "You told me you were gentlemen, and I must take your assertion for it until I have proof to the contrary."

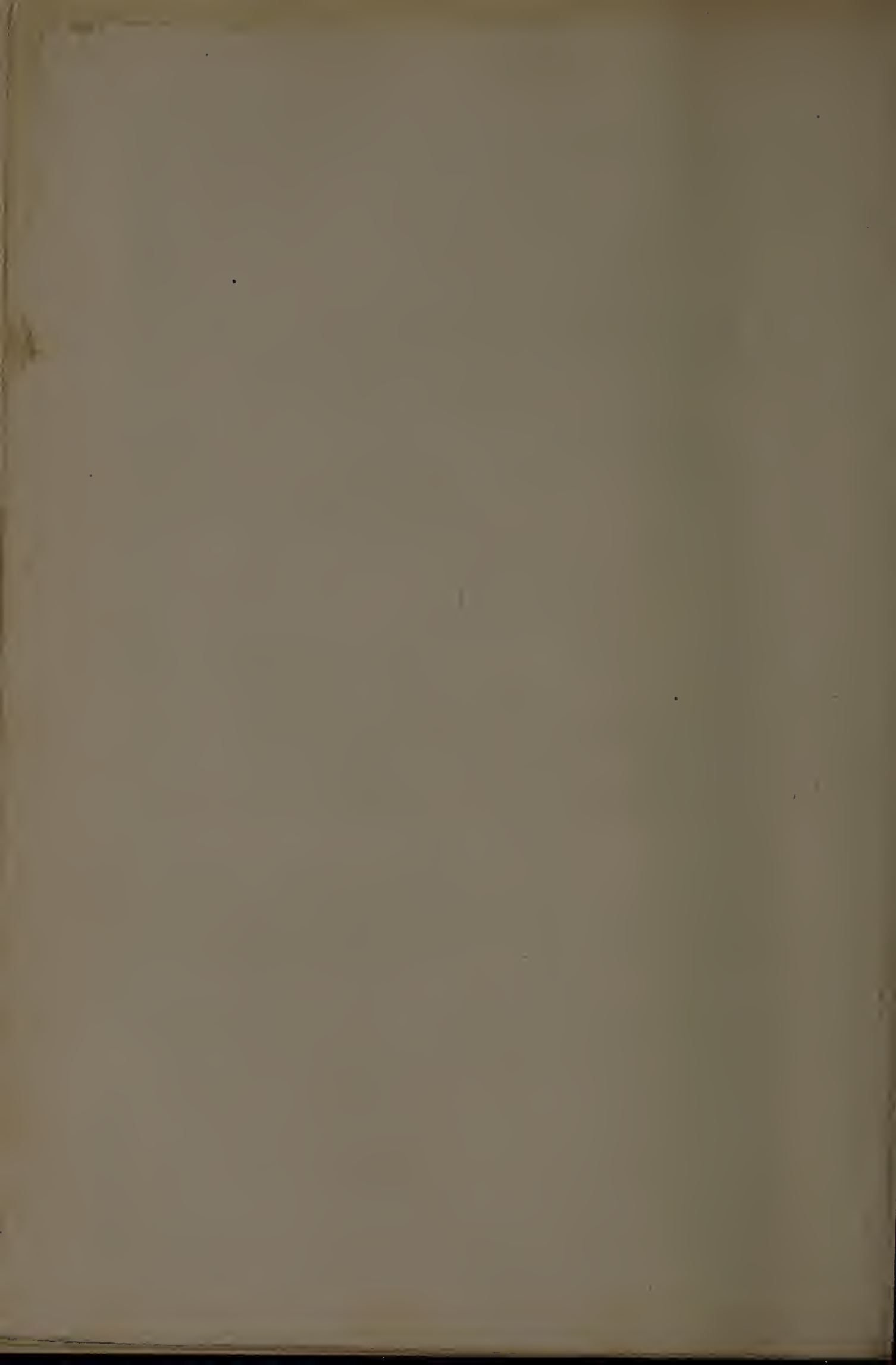
"Very well; but be careful how you emphasize your words."

"I told you I was not an orator, consequently you



“Reuben began to sing to the tune of ‘Old Hundred’—‘Tobacco is a Filthy Weed.’”

(See page 131)



mustn't expect a model speech. If I haven't said enough already, I'll continue by suggesting that this meeting be postponed until some more convenient season, when I shall be better able to enjoy all the sport. It seems too bad to give you the full benefit when I'm not in condition to get my share."

"Let him stop, and show how well he can dance," some one suggested, and Reuben could not repress a groan.

"Why not hold up and watch me while I'm sick?" he asked, grimly, as the nausea increased. "You have no idea how interesting I will look in about five minutes if you fellows keep those infernal pipes going."

He was taking the hazing in such good part that half the Seniors' fun was spoiled.

They had hoped he would fight against the indignities, and his obedience rendered the performance rather tame.

It was necessary to carry out the programme, however, or, at least, the visitors seemed to think it was, and the victim was peremptorily ordered to dance.

This he did to the best of his ability, forced to take refuge at the window every few seconds, and when five minutes had passed his visitors departed, saying:

"We regret that it is impossible for us to remain any longer, Mr. Green——"

"Don't mention it," Reuben replied, with a groan. "I am willing to sacrifice my own pleasure! if it is necessary for you to go so soon."

"We shall call again in the near future——"

"Not if I know myself, you won't," and now the victim began to show signs of temper. "According to my

way of thinking, I've furnished the fun for you fellows as long as is necessary, and in the future propose to take care of myself, so don't run any risks by coming again."

The visitors had left the room before he ceased speaking, and at this implied threat would have returned but that he closed and locked the door too quickly.

"When a freshman gets his back up we generally know how to take it down," the spokesman of the party cried from the outside.

"You may be able to do that some other time; but just now I reckon there won't be any more visiting done, because I've got an important engagement with my stomach."

This remark, coupled as it was with the sound of retching, caused no slight degree of merriment; but yet the bold words which had been spoken could not be allowed to pass unnoticed.

"We shall come again, and repeat the visits until you are willing to submit quietly to all our commands," one of the party called through the keyhole, and then the sound of rapid footsteps on the stairs told that the Seniors had really taken their departure.

During the next hour Reuben was deathly sick, and this disagreeable sensation had but just begun to pass away when the knob of the door was turned.

"You can't come in," he cried.

"Why not?"

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said, recognizing the familiar voice of Billy Moore, and an instant later the door was unlocked.

"So you've been having a smoking party, eh?" Billy asked, with a smile, as he entered.

"Yes, and it's the last arrangement of the kind that will be made in this college with me as the victim," Reuben replied, emphatically.

"It's all very well for you to make up your mind to that effect; but you mustn't let the fellows hear you, or they'll give you a chance to prove that it can be done. In things of that sort the greatest fun is to have the freshman kick."

"I don't care what they hear. I told the crowd who just left that it couldn't be done again, and I mean it."

"Then you've made a big mistake, for you'll be in hot water before to-morrow night."

"Let them come. It isn't likely I'll have a chance to stay here many days longer, and I intend to hold up my end of the pole during that time. Have you heard anything about last night's scrape?"

"Nothing very important. Most likely all hands will be called upon in the morning to tell what they know about the matter, and when every fellow denies having any knowledge whatever regarding it, I reckon the faculty must drop it, for they can't expel the whole class."

"But there are plenty who saw what we did, and it isn't likely they'd lie to save us."

"Oh, it isn't, eh? Well, I'd like to see the fellow who'd blow!"

"They've got to do that, or lie."

"Then they'll lie like little men."

"I am not so certain that's a manly thing to do," Reuben replied, thoughtfully.

Billy looked at his companion in surprise for a moment, and then asked, sharply:

"Are you thinking of giving the snap away?"

"I don't think I shall crawl out of it by lying," and the freshman from Aurora straightened himself up as if anticipating a conflict which would not be confined to words.

Billy remained silent several moments, too much astonished to be capable of speech, and then said, sharply:

"Of course, you've got the right to do as you please; but it would be a good idea to remember what such a fit of honesty is likely to cost you. There isn't a fellow in this college who would be seen speaking to you afterward, and——"

"Why not?"

"Because no fellow likes a sneak, and that's what we call those who blow on their friends."

"According to the way I've been handled since striking this city it doesn't seem as if I had any friends to blow on, unless you consider it a mark of friendship to rough into a fellow as you have me."

"That was only sport, and didn't hurt anybody——"

"Perhaps you'd talk differently if you'd been trussed up half an hour the same as I was while waiting to be introduced to the sacred Gunjabee."

Billy could not repress a smile as he thought of that famous initiation, which he had devised and conducted

with such great success, and this evidence of mirth was not calculated to soothe Reuben.

"I suppose it was funny," he said, angrily; "but in order to fully appreciate it you should have been in my place."

By this time Billy understood that it would be wisest for him to remain silent, for the freshman from Aurora, still smarting under the pain of being smoked out, was rapidly working himself into a fury.

"I reckon I'd better leave, and come again in the morning," he said, mildly. "After this term you'll enjoy hazing newcomers as much as we do."

"I hope not, for I should be ashamed of myself."

Billy made no reply, for at that moment his glance rested upon an envelope directed in the primmest of female penmanship, and he immediately concluded it was a missive from Reuben's Matilda.

A sudden, and what at the time seemed like a happy thought, came into his mind.

He did not consider it stealing to borrow the letter for a few hours, and at once began manœuvering to gain possession of it.

The epistle was lying on the table near where he stood, while Reuben remained by the window in order to take advantage of the pure air, for his stomach was not yet in a comfortable condition.

"I don't want you to think hard of me, Reub," he said, in what he intended should be a soothing tone. "It was all done in fun, and every fellow here has been through the same experience."

As he spoke, he placed one hand on the table as if to steady himself, and, straightening up again almost immediately, had gained possession of the coveted letter.

"We won't talk about it now," Reuben replied, with considerable dignity. "I'm not feeling very well, and would rather be alone."

"I suppose that means for me to go. All right, old man, I'll see you in the morning," and Billy went out, feeling quite confident he could prevent the freshman from making a clean breast of the Osborn Hall affair.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REUBEN'S MATILDA.

When Billy Moore rejoined Roy Moody after calling on the freshman from Aurora, his first exclamation was:

“What do you think Plain Reuben is going to do?”

“Haul the dean over the coals for not coming at the proper time to tuck him up in bed?”

“This isn't anything to make sport of; I only wish it was.”

“It must be serious to make you look so glum, though I'm bound to confess you haven't been out of the dumps since that famous banner business.”

“It's about that I wanted to talk. Plain Reuben the same as told me he should own up to the whole thing in case he was questioned.”

“What!”

“That's a fact, and if he does we shall be in a worse scrape than ever. Now we are all right, if the crowd stick together, and refuse to give anything away; but the fat will be in the fire if he opens his big mouth.”

“You are right, and there's no question but that a good many of us will have a chance to go home for a long while.”

“What would you be willing to do in order to prevent him from giving the snap away?”

"Almost anything, for I suppose every fellow who was with the crowd will come in for a full share of punishment."

"Then I've got a plan that'll shut his mouth, unless I'm very much mistaken."

"I never saw you when you hadn't something of the kind. But let's hear this one, for Plain Reuben has been getting rather the best of you lately, and it'll be interesting to know how you intend to bring him to subjection."

"Do you see this letter?" and Billy drew from his pocket the missive he had stolen.

"Well, what of it?"

"It's from Reuben's Matilda."

"How did you get it?"

"Saw the thing on the table, and concluded it would serve us a good turn in case he carried out his threat, or, I should say, in the event of his attempting to do so."

"Don't be so long telling the story. It isn't at all the thing to steal a fellow's love-letter, and this plan of yours may get you into worse trouble than the banner raising."

"I only borrowed it for a while. He shall have it back by morning; I'll manage to drop it somewhere in the room."

"What did you want of it, anyway?"

"I'm going to copy the handwriting—you see, it won't be hard, for all girls write alike—and he shall get a letter from his Matilda to-morrow."

"See here, Billy," and Roy spoke very seriously, "I advise you not to do anything of the kind. It's a mighty

ticklish matter to commit forgery, and that's what your scheme amounts to."

"Now, don't get scared, as you always do. I'm in the mire worse than anybody else, and shall take every chance to prevent being expelled. It doesn't make so much matter to that Aurora fool, for he can't understand what it means; but I'd rather be dead than go to father in disgrace."

"Then why don't you give over playing tricks? A fellow would think, to see you manoeuvre, that your highest ambition was to be sent home."

"I don't see how you make it out."

"You no sooner get clear of one scrape than you are into another head over heels, and then the first to whine is your blessed self."

"Look here, Roy Moody, I don't want to hear any sermons from you. I never saw the time when you wasn't ready to come with me on a racket, and I never whined worse than you have."

"Suppose we let some of the other fellows decide that?"

"I can render my own decisions," Billy replied, angrily. "If it wasn't that I'm in the scrape I wouldn't lift my hand to help you out of this."

"I don't want to get clear by means of a theft and forgery. It would be better to take the medicine like men, rather than do that," and Roy walked rapidly away, leaving Billy in a towering rage.

"I wish I could fix this matter up and let him stay in the hole," the practical joker said, angrily; "but whatever I do for myself will help all hands, and more's the pity."

Billy was not to be deterred from carrying into effect the plan he had formed, by anything Roy might have said, and the only result of the interview was that he resolved to work alone.

Hurrying to his room, he read and re-read the letter from Matilda to Reuben, studying carefully the formation of each character.

There was nothing of a private nature in the missive, if one excepts the few words of affection; but at the same time it is safe to say no fellow would like to have another read the most innocent note which had been written by his best girl.

Billy spent fully an hour practicing with the letter, and then he felt confident of being able to imitate the penmanship.

"I reckon I'm ready now," he said, in a tone of satisfaction, as he compared some of his efforts with the lines Matilda had penned; "the only thing to upset my plan is that the letter must be mailed from this city, and if he takes notice of the postmark the jig is up."

Half an hour later he had composed and written the following:

MY DEAR REUBEN:—I see by the Bangor paper that some of the students at Yale have been doing horrible things. It makes me shudder to think that young gentleman would dare to hang such a banner on Osborn Hall.

What kind of a hall is that, by the way?

I truly hope you was not concerned in such a disgraceful proceeding, and feel quite certain you couldn't have been, for I would never want to hear from you again, and shouldn't so much as see you, if such was the case.

I don't know why I write this, for I have too much confidence in you to believe you knew anything about it.

I hope that all who were concerned in the matter will be expelled, and those who have sweethearts deserve to lose them.

Dear Reuben, don't associate with young men who do such things, for it would break my heart to know you could even countenance rowdyism like that.

I have only written because it seemed as if I must after reading the newspaper article, and won't tell you any of the home news until the next letter.

With my dearest love, I am ever your

MATILDA.

Billy was really proud of his work when it had been completed and sealed in an envelope directed to "Mr. Reuben Green."

"That's what I call a mighty neat job," he said, as he scrutinized the superscription. "Plain Reuben is precious smart if he tumbles to the game, and after reading it there's little chance of his blowing the story as he threatened. Now it must be mailed so he'll get it to-morrow morning."

According to his belief, there was no time to be lost, and he went to the post office without delay.

The letter was dropped in the box, and he had begun to retrace his steps when he met Jack Dudley.

As a matter of course, that young gentleman wanted to know what Billy was "up to" at such a late hour, and the latter, under promises of the strictest secrecy, explained the whole affair, including the conversation held with Roy on the subject.

"Well," Jack said, when Billy concluded, "I must say, I don't wonder Moody tried to sit on your plan, for it's the most stupid I ever heard of, to say nothing of the

fact that you're almost certain to get into no end of trouble about it."

"So you're going back on a fellow, too, are you?"

"Not a bit of it; but it makes me feel badly to see you working to get yourself into such a mess."

"I don't see how any harm can come of it, even though it could be called a forgery."

"Then I'll have to explain. In the first place, Plain Reuben will tumble to the whole racket, if he notices the post office stamp."

"That's the only way it can be a failure."

"I don't agree with you on that point. He has sense enough to know that even if the news were published in the Bangor papers on the morning the banner was discovered, his Matilda wouldn't have time to see the article and get a letter to him by to-morrow morning."

"He won't stop to think of that."

"Don't fool yourself. Then, again, when was an account of the affair given in the city papers here? Not until this evening, and you may be certain he knows that fact. Just allow for a moment that he is taken in by your very clumsy scheme, how long will it take him to find out he's been hoaxed? Why, it stands to reason he'll answer it the first thing, and in two or three days receive an answer, saying she never heard of the matter. Then he'll examine the envelope, and the whole thing will be as plain as a b c. You were the last one in his room; you have played him some pretty hard tricks, and he will decide you have done this also. Now, how do you suppose he'll act after finding out you stole his girl's letter?"

I know what I'd do, and it's safe betting that you will get the boss flogging of the season."

Billy looked thoroughly frightened; but he braced up sufficiently to say with an assumption of boldness which was far from real.

"He may not find that such an easy job."

"Now, don't fool yourself again, Billy. Plain Reuben could wipe the earth up with you, even if one hand was tied behind his back, and you know it. He was only egging you on the other night; any one with half an eye could have seen that."

Billy's face gave proof of the fear which was in his heart.

Jack had put the case so plainly that he began to understand what a position he had placed himself in, and he said, in a voice which was by no means firm:

"I wonder if I can't get that letter back? It hasn't been in the post office more than five minutes."

"How do you propose to ask for it?"

"Tell them I want what I just left there."

"Do you think they would give you a letter directed to another fellow?"

"Yes, if I told them what was in it."

"Can you swear that your name is Matilda, and your home in Maine?"

Billy grew pale, and one would have said his knees were very weak.

"I have made a fool of myself, and no mistake," he said, in a low tone. "Can't you think of some way for me to crawl out, Jack?"

"I don't see even the smallest kind of a hole. It stands you in hand to put in all your time practicing with the gloves, for a knowledge of the manly art of self-defense will soon be absolutely necessary."

"Where is Roy?"

"Gone with a crowd who intend to make Plain Reuben swear he won't let on about what was done last night, so you see this forgery of yours was not only a clumsy piece of work, but absolutely unnecessary."

Billy was silent.

He understood what a terrible scrape he had gotten himself into, and the result, however the affair of the banner might terminate, would be very disagreeable for him.

CHAPTER XIX.

HELD A PRISONER.

While Billy Moore was repenting bitterly his attempt to prevent Plain Reuben from telling what he knew regarding the hanging of the banner on Osborn Hall, another party of students were pursuing a far different course to gain the same end.

Roy Moody told several of his friends, after learning from Billy what it was feared the freshman from Aurora might do, and they at once set about trying to prevent him from carrying out his threat.

Billy would have been consulted in the matter, but he was not to be found, and no one supposed him to be in his own apartments, for that was a place to which he seldom went, save when it was absolutely necessary.

Therefore it was that he remained in complete ignorance of the whole affair, save for the slight information given by Jack Dudley.

When Billy left Reuben's room the latter had ample food for thought. He knew in what light the students would regard him in case he confessed his guilt in the matter of hanging the banner on Osborn Hall; but at the same time it seemed a more manly thing to do than to tell a deliberate lie.

During fully half an hour after his visitor departed,

he thought the affair over without being able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, and then said to himself, as he arose to his feet:

“It’s mighty hard to decide just what should be done. I reckon I’ve got to go home, anyway, and I’d rather leave here with some little respect for myself, than to have all hands know me for a liar.”

Then came the thought of Matilda’s letter, which had been received that morning, and hastily read because of the trouble on his mind.

“I’ll see what the dear girl says; there’ll be some comfort in hearing about the folks at home, if nothing more, and just now I need something to cheer me up, if ever a fellow did.”

He distinctly remembered having left the letter on the table; but he looked for it in vain.

A thorough search of the room and all his belongings failed to reveal the missing article, and he stared about him in perplexity, as if fancying some mysterious power had spirited the missive away.

“How could it have left this room?” he asked himself, and the question was but just formed in his mind when came the thought: “By Jinks! Billy Moore is the only fellow who has been here, for I remember seeing it after that crowd of smokers left.”

Even then he could hardly persuade himself any of the students would dare to do such a thing as steal a letter; but it was plain some one had done so, and Billy was the only one who could be accused with any degree of reason.

“I’ll have it from him, and give him a good thumping

into the bargain before I sleep this night," he exclaimed, as he started toward the door.

It was destined, however, that he was not to leave as soon as he wished, for on reaching the head of the stairs a crowd of fellows was seen ascending.

"Another case of roughing into me!" he said, darting back in the hope of being able to barricade himself in the room; but the time was too short.

The visitors had seen and divined the meaning of his rapid movement.

Two of the foremost sprang forward to prevent him from closing the door, and in another instant the entire crowd were inside the apartment.

Reuben prepared to give battle by arming himself with a cane, and stood at bay in one corner.

"Now, see here!" he cried, as some of the company closed and locked the door, removing the key to guard against his escape, "there's been one crowd here this evening, and I told them that I'd stood all the hazing I thought necessary. Up to this time I've been like a lamb when you wanted to play funny tricks; but there's got to be an end, and I have decided it shall come now."

"This time you are making a mistake," Roy said, soothingly. "We haven't come to make trouble for you, but simply to talk over the affair of the banner."

"There's been too much of that done already. What good does it do to keep chinning about it? If any of the faculty see us meeting so often it won't be hard for them to guess what's up."

"We don't propose to discuss the matter, but want to know if what Billy Moore says is true?"

"Where is that fellow? I've got a good-sized crow to pick with him."

"I think he went down town; but that has nothing to do with us. Did you say to him that you were going to own up to the truth in regard to the banner, if you were questioned?"

"I don't know as I said exactly those words; but I meant very much the same thing."

"And you really mean to blow on the crowd?" Roy asked, in surprise.

"That isn't necessary; if I am asked whether I had anything to do with it, I think I shall make a clean breast so far as I am concerned," and Reuben straightened up, for he knew a struggle was imminent.

"Can't you see that by doing so you would insure your own expulsion?"

"That is bound to come, anyway. It isn't likely that, in a matter where so many were concerned, the facts can be kept secret."

"It won't help things by giving the snap away."

"Better that than to go home branded as a liar."

"Now, see here, Reuben, if all hands keep their mouths shut, there's no chance it can be found out, so what's the use of putting the whole crowd into the hole?"

"I don't intend to do any more than own up to my share," Reuben replied, doggedly.

"But you mustn't do even that, for the dean has only

to find out who were with you that evening, and the story is told," one of the party said, impatiently.

The tone rather than the words aroused Reuben's anger, and he asked, sharply:

"Since when have you fellows had the right to decide what I shall say or do? It seems that I'd better paddle my own canoe when I'm with those who can do as you have, and wind up by stealing a letter from my room."

"Who has done that?" half-a-dozen asked, in astonishment.

"I can't say; but it laid on this table after some young gentlemen treated me to a smoking, and an hour later was gone."

"Do you think one of the smokers took it?" a visitor asked, stepping forward quickly, and thus proclaiming himself a member of the masked party.

"I am certain they did not, for it was here after they left; but a student of this college did so, and I bring you all in, since it is but a piece of the same treatment I have been receiving."

"If the guilty party can be found he shall suffer for it," the same speaker said.

"You bet he will!" and Reuben spoke very emphatically.

"Then don't let's say anything more about that business now," Roy interrupted; "but come down to our own affairs. Reuben, will you agree to stick to the same story all hands of us are going to tell?"

"I don't believe I care to."

"Then you are willing every one shall think you a sneak of the first water?"

"I've got good reason to want their good opinion, haven't I?"

"Certainly, since, if this matter of the banner can be hushed up, you will be with them for the next three years."

"I count on being back in Aurora before many days go by."

"And you refuse to promise?"

"I do."

The visitors hesitated, looked questioningly at each other a few seconds, and then one said, firmly:

"It must be done. We can't afford to take chances. Don't have a big row, though."

As he spoke the party sprang toward the freshman. As they did so, Reuben caught one by the hair, and raised the cane to give his tormentor a blow, when the stick was caught by another of the party, and in a few moments Reuben was held securely in their grasp, when Roy said, in a friendly tone:

"We don't want to hurt you, Reuben, but you must understand what will be the result to us, if the faculty find out we had a hand in the banner business. You may be willing to go home in disgrace, but we are not, and we propose to make certain the information won't be given."

"How can you do that?"

"Keep you prisoner somewhere until you agree not to tell anything regarding the incidents of the other night."

"Then you'll have me on your hands quite a while."

It was evident the visitors did not wish to proceed to extremities, for each, in turn, did his best to persuade Reuben; but in vain.

The freshman was enraged because they dared threaten him, and every word only served to make him the more stubborn.

Now that coercion had been attempted, it was necessary to carry it on, and the visitors began to discuss the question of where the prisoner should be kept until he was willing to agree to their demands.

Reuben listened to all that was said, but spoke not a word. He was determined to hold out as long as they should, and it did not seem possible they would dare carry the matter very far.

It was finally agreed Reuben should be confined to his own room, and that two of those concerned in the banner-raising remain with him night and day.

Each couple of watchers was to be relieved every twelve hours, and the prisoner kept lashed to the bed, while a gag should be ready in case he attempted to make any outcry.

"We'll give you one more chance," the leader of the party said to the angry freshman. "Promise to hold your tongue in regard to the banner, and we'll apologize for having come here in such a manner."

"I don't want your apologies; and I won't promise if you keep me here till doomsday. It isn't likely the faculty will believe I have run away, and there must be some search made for me."

"No one will hunt for you. By to-morrow night it will be believed you have skipped because of what was done, and your name will be posted for expulsion. We shall carry out our threat, and take the chances when you have an opportunity to see the dean."

No further conversation was indulged in either by the prisoner or his captors.

He was lashed to the bed in such a manner that he could move only in a limited space, and all the party, save the two watchers, left the room.

CHAPTER XX.

A NEW MOVE.

Even while the visitors were lashing him to the bed, Reuben did not believe they would dare to carry out their threats.

It hardly seemed possible a fellow could thus be held prisoner without some knowledge of the fact coming to the ears of the faculty, and the victim's idea was that he would be released in a short time.

When, however, the main body of the visitors departed, leaving behind only the two keepers, and these last set about their work in such a businesslike manner, the freshman began to think the matter more serious than he had at first supposed.

"What do you fellows think I shall do when you can no longer keep me here?" he asked, after a pause, during which his jailers had made themselves comfortable at the other side of the room.

"It isn't worth while to speculate about that, for the time is so far away. We could hold you a month without arousing suspicion."

"But the day must finally come when I shall be free, and then the dean will not only hear of the outrage, but learn the name of every fellow connected with it."

"We are thinking only of the present now; the future

can take care of itself. Since doing what we have, you can fancy how far we will be ready to go in order to accomplish our purpose. By the day after to-morrow you will probably cease to be connected with the college; your father will be notified, and he'll naturally think you have gone off on a long journey to hide your shame, therefore many weeks may elapse before inquiries are made for the freshman from Aurora."

This was a view of the case which Reuben had not entertained until now, and he could see clearly that he was at the mercy of those who demanded an oath from him.

When the morning came and he was missing, the natural inference would be that, having been the prime mover in the banner affair, he had run away rather than remain and take his punishment.

Word would be sent to Aurora, and Matilda could not fail to hear all the particulars.

He pictured in his mind the grief of his parents and the girl whom he called his sweetheart.

It was easy to imagine what his enemies might say when it was known he had been dismissed in disgrace, and he could not repress a groan as all these thoughts came into his mind.

The watchers exchanged significant glances on hearing this evidence of weakness; but it was not a portion of their plans to urge him more than had already been done.

The leaders in the scheme believed he would succumb sooner if left to his own reflections.

Reuben did not offer to enter into conversation during

the remainder of the night, and at eight o'clock on the following morning two other fellows arrived to relieve those who had been so long on watch.

The freshman paid no attention to the newcomers until one of them took a letter from his pocket, and laid it on the bed.

"I found this in the box, and brought it up so there could be no reason for you to accuse us of making way with your mail matter."

Reuben looked at the address, and believed the writing to be Matilda's.

"There isn't much chance for me to find out what's in it while I'm tied down in this fashion," he said, grimly.

"If you solemnly promise not to make any noise, or attempt in any way to escape, we'll untie your hands long enough for you to read it."

"All right; I promise."

The ropes were removed from the upper portion of his body, and he opened the letter, paying no attention to the postmark.

As a matter of course, it was the missive Billy had prepared which Reuben held, and the forgery was so clever that he had no idea but that his sweetheart had really sent it.

Owing to the circumstances, and the agitation of mind, the freshman paid no attention to the time which had elapsed since the banner was raised.

He had suffered so much mentally that it seemed as if many days must have passed since the fatal night.

Nothing could have happened just at that time which

would have influenced Reuben so quickly as did those supposed words of Matilda's.

In them he saw a threat that she would never meet him again if he was concerned in the insult offered the faculty, and it seemed as if the only way by which her affection could be retained was to take the oath demanded of him.

The unhappy freshman knew only too well that it might become necessary for him to perjure himself; but since the receipt of the letter he could see no other way out of the difficulty, and after reading the lines over and over again, he said to one of the watchers:

"I reckon I may as well give in."

"Will you take the oath?"

"That's the price, and I shall have to pay it."

"Then we'll send for the other fellows, for every one must be here when you swear."

"All right. I'm ready when you are; but you needn't hurry, for I've been here so long that a few hours more or less can't make any difference."

"There's no need of keeping you tied down if you give us your word of honor to remain quiet until the others arrive."

"I wonder how much honor a fellow can have who is willing to swear he'll tell a lie," Reuben said, grimly. "Down our way we'd call him pretty hard names."

"But this is something which is absolutely necessary for the safety of all, and it is an honorable lie. Better that than to be a sneak."

"All right, since I'm to tell an honorable lie, you may as well let me up, for I sha'n't back out."

The bonds were removed, and Reuben arose to his feet, feeling rather ashamed that he had given in so quickly.

His first care was to put the letter in his pocket, lest it should be stolen like the other, and this also was decidedly to Billy's advantage, since it prevented a scrutiny which might have revealed the forgery.

In a very short time after word had been sent of Reuben's surrender, those who made him prisoner arrived, and he expected some formal ceremony would be necessary; but to his surprise one of the party said:

"We only want your word as a gentleman that you will deny knowing anything about the banner which was raised on Osborn Hall. It is as much to your advantage as ours that we ask this, although you couldn't see it for a long while."

"I give you my word to all you require; but as for its being to my advantage I am not so certain. I didn't surrender because I was convinced, but owing to the fact that you held the whip hand."

This promise was all the party required, and now that it had been given each one tried his best to make friends with the victim.

Apologies were offered in due form, each of which Reuben accepted with a good grace, saying as he did so:

"The trouble is yet to come, and I fancy we shall have as much as we can handle before noon."

"If we all stick to the same story, I don't see that anything can be done, for both the junior and freshman

classes must be dismissed, if the actual offenders can't be singled out."

This was said by the leader of the party, and he appeared to be so confident that Reuben began to feel as if he might possibly succeed in remaining at Yale a while longer.

When the visitors departed, a stranger would have said that they and the freshman from Aurora were on the best of terms, so friendly was the bearing of all.

Reuben's great desire now was to find Billy Moore, and square accounts with him in regard to the theft of the letter, but it was not an easy matter to meet that young gentleman. He had a very good idea of what the fellow from Maine might do, and concluded it would not be safe even to try to return the missive.

Contrary to the expectations of all, nothing was said by the faculty relative to the insult offered, and when night came the culprits congratulated themselves on having escaped detection.

"You see, the dean knows he couldn't find out who actually hung the canvas in place, and he don't dare make a move for fear of having to discipline the entire class," Jack Dudley said, when he called upon Reuben after supper.

"I'm not so certain the storm has blown over," the freshman replied. "They may be laying low in the hope some fellow will give himself away."

"I don't think there's any chance of that. It was time wasted, making you a prisoner in order to have you promise not to tell."

"I'm glad I sha'n't be called upon to tell a lie, for that's a coward's way of doing business."

"Don't let it worry you; the trouble is over without any harm having been done; but it will be a long while before Billy Moore gets me into such a mess again."

"Have you seen him to-day?" Reuben asked, quickly.

"Only at a distance. He acts as if he didn't care to meet any of the crowd."

"I want to see him very particularly; but my business can wait, I reckon."

Jack knew exactly what the "business" was, therefore he refrained from asking any questions, and a few moments later went to his own room.

Now that he was alone, Reuben determined to answer Matilda's letter, and, after getting out the writing materials, drew the missive from his pocket.

This time the postmark attracted his attention.

"How does that happen?" he asked himself. "This was mailed in New Haven! Matilda couldn't have sent it on by any one from home, otherwise she would have told me."

He studied over the problem some time before looking again at the letter, and then, quite naturally, he began to compare dates.

He reckoned the time it would take for the Bangor papers to reach Aurora, and looked at the date of the New Haven *Journal* which contained the first account of the affair.

"This thing couldn't have reached Bangor when Matilda wrote!" he exclaimed, coming to his feet very

suddenly. "In order for me to have received her letter this morning it would have been necessary for it to be mailed the day before the banner was hung on Osborn Hall."

After making this discovery it was not difficult for him to guess very nearly what had been done, and he said, angrily, as he put on his coat and hat:

"I'll find that little villain, if it takes me all night! He stole my letter so he could imitate the handwriting, and one or the other of us will be the worse for wear between now and sunrise!"

CHAPTER XXI.

HUNTING FOR BILLY.

When Reuben started out in search of Billy Moore there was "blood in his eye," as Jack expressed it.

The latter met the angry freshman just as he was leaving the dormitories, and asked the reason of his late walk.

Reuben was so angry that it seemed a positive relief to be able to confide in some one, and Jack heard in detail what he already knew.

"Where are you going to look for him?" he asked.

"First at his rooms, and then downtown; I have a pretty good idea of where he spends his evenings."

"What do you propose to do?"

"What any other fellow would under the same circumstances; flog him, or get the worst pounding I ever had."

"Why not do the thing in proper shape, and have it out in the gymnasium with gloves?"

"I don't need anything on my hands when I meet him."

"That is very true; but just at this time it would come awkward to be called up for fighting, and there could be no such charge made if it appeared only a friendly set-to."

Reuben was too angry to listen to reason at that moment.

It seemed to him an absolute necessity that he meet Billy within the shortest possible space of time, and he did

not like the idea of a glove encounter when he wanted the marks of the fray to be apparent.

"Well, all I can say is that Billy has got himself into another bad scrape, and he won't come out of it so easy as he has some others," Jack said to himself, as Reuben darted across the campus like a small-sized whirlwind.

He was yet wondering whether the freshman's chase would be successful, when he ran plump into the very fellow he was thinking of.

"Well, old man, it seems that we needn't bother our heads about the banner business any more."

"Oh, is that you, Billy? Where have you been?"

"Downtown. I thought perhaps it would be better not to meet Plain Reuben for a while."

"So? And yet you come back to the college grounds at this early hour."

"Oh, yes; I fancy there's little danger to be apprehended from him; besides, it isn't certain he has begun to suspect anything yet; but I suppose he's bound to when he hears from Matilda again," and Billy spoke in an airy fashion as if the matter gave him very little concern.

"I don't think he'll wait for that," Jack replied, grimly. "If he should happen to come along now you'd find out precious soon whether he had begun to suspect."

"What do you mean? Have you seen him lately?"

"Left him here not three minutes ago."

"Where was he going?"

"To your rooms."

"What for?"

"He allows that either you or he will get a flogging before morning."

"Does he know about the letter?"

"Of course. A driveling idiot would have tumbled to your very thin racket in time."

"Do you think he really means fight?" Billy asked in a whisper, and looking very much as if he was frightened.

"You'd think so if you should see and hear him, and, to tell the truth, Billy, I don't blame him. A fellow could stand almost anything better than what you have done."

"And he wants to fight!" Billy repeated.

"Yes, of course he does, and you'd better make up your mind that it must come."

"But, Jack, I wouldn't be in it with him!"

"You should have thought of that before you played your very smart trick."

Billy was in the greatest distress of mind.

He had every reason to believe Reuben could worst him in one round, and it was probable there would be no attention paid to the rules governing contests, until after the freshman's revenge had been fully wrought.

"Say, Jack, can't you help me out of this in some way?"

"I don't know what to do. I did suggest that he go with you into the gymnasium and put on the gloves——"

"If he'd do that I couldn't get hurt so very much," Billy said, in a tone of relief.

"That's true; but the unfortunate part of the matter is that he refuses to do anything of the kind; says he don't want gloves on when he meets you."

Billy shivered, although the air was far from being cold.

"What shall I do?"

"If you don't want to take your medicine like a man, sneak off somewhere till he cools down. It may be possible we can arrange a meeting between you two as I suggested; but unless you wish to have a painful meeting, keep out of his way to-night."

"I'll go to a hotel and sleep," Billy said, his teeth actually chattering with fear. "Try to get word to me in the morning if he has cooled down any."

"I'll do what I can, old fellow; but, at the same time, I don't have very much sympathy, for you have brought it all on yourself, and would be in the same kind of a scrape to-morrow if matters were squared up now."

"I'm going to swear off, and that's a fact," Billy said, solemnly. "What with the row about the banner, and stirring Plain Reuben up, I've had enough to last me for this season."

"I think it's time; if you keep on at the same rate you have begun this fall, we shall all be in hot water before Christmas. Now crawl into your hole, and I'll get some of the other fellows to talk with our Aurora freshman; but there's no mistake about his thirsting for gore."

Billy lost no time in "seeking his hole;" but went toward the hotel at a rapid pace, glancing over his shoulder now and then, as if afraid of being followed.

From this interview Jack had considerable amusement, for he thought Billy should be made to suffer for his reckless manner of practical joking, and there was no

question but that the young gentleman was in a very uncomfortable frame of mind.

"I reckon this will teach him a lesson, for it strikes me we sha'n't have much luck trying to persuade Plain Reuben out of his revenge."

However much he thought Billy needed a lesson, Jack Dudley was not one to forget a promise, or to shirk from aiding a friend; therefore he called immediately on Roy Moody, for the purpose of enlisting his sympathies in the joker's behalf.

Roy did not think he should interfere, but said quite sharply in reply to Jack's request:

"It's time Billy Moore was allowed to get himself out of these scrapes. He goes ahead regardless of the consequences, and then expects other fellows to pull him through. See how he has fixed all hands of us with that foolish banner business."

"But it is no reason why we shouldn't help him, and this is as much to aid Reuben as Billy. The freshman don't realize what will be the result if he kicks up a regular row on the street, and, besides, if he should be brought before the faculty for such a thing it is more than likely the Osborn Hall matter would all come out."

This was something which concerned Roy's own safety, therefore he showed more willingness to listen.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked, gruffly.

Jack explained his idea that the two might meet in the gymnasium, where everything would look straight, and there fight until Reuben was satisfied.

"If Billy is to get a flogging after all, then I'll do

what I can to help you. We'll have the others there, and let Plain Reuben treat us to a slugging match. It isn't a bad idea, and I hope the freshman will agree to it."

"I reckon he will, more especially if he can't find Billy. Come on; we've no time to lose, for the two may meet by accident before we can do the peace-making act."

It was not a difficult matter to see Reuben.

Failing to meet Billy at the latter's rooms, he had tramped up one street and down another in the hope of meeting his enemy, and was standing in front of the restaurant patronized by the college boys when the two arrived.

Jack would have begun negotiations by inviting the angry freshman to lunch, but he would listen to nothing of the kind.

"I can't afford to fool around until after my debts are paid," he said. "Let me once square accounts with Billy Moore, and then I'll go anywhere you propose."

Under these circumstances it was necessary for the "peace-makers" to broach their errand on the street, and for some time Reuben refused to listen.

Jack played his trump card by representing that in case the freshman should inflict the deserved punishment in public, his expulsion would surely follow, and then Reuben became more tractable.

"You can put on the gloves with him," Roy said, persuasively; "the fellows will be there to see fair play, and if he gets bruised it will pass for an accident. There's no chance any harm can come of it, and, besides, only think

what a favor you'll be doing our crowd by letting them see the whole performance."

"I never had gloves on," Reuben said, thoughtfully, thus showing he was yielding.

"They won't interfere with your movements at all."

"But can I punish him enough? I think bare knuckles are what he needs."

"I'll answer for it that he'll get a full dose from the gloves if you know how to handle yourself."

"I'm not much on science; but if I can't get away with him I'll promise never to go back to Aurora."

"You agree to meeting him at the gymnasium?" Jack asked, eagerly.

"Yes, I suppose I'd better."

"Then go home now, and leave me to arrange matters. I'll take care of your end of the affair, and Billy can get some fellow to act for him."

Reuben obeyed at once. Having given his word he had no idea of doing other than his friends wished, and Jack and Roy came very near embracing each other in their delight at having a regular "mill" on hand.

"We'll invite a select party," Jack said, gleefully, "and if Billy can fight a little bit this will be the event of the season."

CHAPTER XXII.

REUBEN'S HONOR.

As may be supposed, the news that Reuben and Billy were to have a regular set-to was spread with great rapidity.

Roy and Jack could not wait until morning to impart the glad tidings, but called upon their particular friends that same night to give the information, and it was everywhere received with delight.

More than one of the young gentlemen expressed surprise that Billy should be so foolish as to pit himself against the freshman from Maine; but, on learning the facts in the case, concluded the practical joker was being let down much easier than he deserved.

The two made no effort to see Billy on this night. Jack said he thought twelve hours of anxiety would be none too much in the way of discipline, and he was allowed to remain in suspense until the following day.

Before Roy was ready to get out of his warm bed next morning, Reuben arrived, looking unusually grave, and Moody feared the anticipated meeting was about to be "called off."

"What's the matter?" he asked, anxiously. "Ain't thinking of backing out, are you?"

"Not a bit of it," Reuben replied, emphatically. "I

said he should be let off by meeting me in the gymnasium, but neglected to make some stipulations, which I think you will agree is my right."

"What are they?"

"In the first place, Moore must return the letter he stole."

"Of course; that goes without saying."

"Then he must admit having committed this forgery."

"I don't think there'll be any trouble in having that arranged. Billy will be only too glad to get out of the scrape in the easiest way, and since I happen to know he did write the bogus letter, we can make him confess."

"Then I have nothing more to say. You and Jack may arrange matters to suit yourselves; but I shall give him a sound thrashing, or get one myself."

"And nobody will blame you if you nearly pound the head off of him."

These preliminaries having been settled, Reuben returned to his own apartments, and, an hour later, Jack and Roy called upon the frightened joker.

Billy had not ventured to leave the hotel in which he sought shelter, but was waiting in the hope his friends would be able to arrange matters with the fellow whom he had wronged.

"We've fixed it," Jack said, answering the questioning look in Billy's eyes; "but you'll have to meet him in the gymnasium."

"That's all right. I expect he can get the best of me, but I shall try hard to down him, and it's better to face him with gloves than bare hands."

"So I think," Jack replied, and then he mentioned the stipulations made by the injured party. "Now, two of us know you did steal his letter, and write the one he received yesterday, so the cheapest way is to agree to the demand."

Billy did not relish eating "humble pie" to such an extent, but there seemed to be no other way to settle the difficulty, and he consented with a very ill grace.

"I suppose I can go out now without fear he'll pitch into me?"

"I'll guarantee he don't raise his hand until we give the word. When do you want the mill to come off?"

"It doesn't make much difference, though I'd like a little time for practice."

"Then suppose we say on the day after to-morrow?"

"All right; I'll be there."

"It'll go hard with you if you ain't," Roy added, threateningly. "There isn't a fellow in college who would speak to you in case of a fluke."

"Don't worry about me," Billy replied, loftily; "and it isn't so dead certain that I sha'n't give him as much as he cares to tackle."

"Who will second you?" Jack asked.

"Why can't Roy do it?"

"I had rather you chose some one else, for all my sympathies are with Reuben; but, if you can't find anybody, of course I'll do it."

"I sha'n't have the time to look around, so we'll count on you," as Billy was fast becoming his old careless self,

now that the evil day had been deferred even for so short a while.

When the facts in the case were made public, and this was done at an early hour on the same morning Billy agreed to the meeting, Reuben found that the sympathies of his fellow-students were all with him.

Very many took especial pains to tell him what they thought of the matter, and to express the hope that he would teach Billy such a lesson as would not soon be forgotten.

"I never had the gloves on, but reckon I can handle him, even if you should tie my hands up in bandages," he replied.

"Why not come over to the gymnasium this afternoon and have a little practice?"

"I don't think that would be the fair thing after forcing the meeting. I should have been prepared when I insisted on seeing him, or now take the consequences."

"But you can bet he'll be training from this hour until the appointed time."

"Very well," Reuben replied, calmly, "that's his privilege; but I don't consider I have any right to do such a thing."

His visitors left him shortly after this remark, wondering how a fellow who had come from the wilds of Maine could have such a nice sense of honor.

"I thought he was a regular fool when he allowed Billy to haul him around," one said; "but he has come to the front mighty quick."

"Don't forget that he had several pretty rough lessons

in which we all assisted the teacher, and if he had any sand at all, was bound to learn something," another replied, with a laugh.

"That is true; but I wish I hadn't taken part in the foolishness, for he's too good a fellow to be mauled as was the case."

"It's all over now, and since his eyeteeth have been cut I fancy it will be a clever sort of chap who can do him up again."

The young gentlemen who had taken part in the banner raising were soon to learn that they were not as secure from punishment as had been imagined on the previous day.

On entering the recitation-rooms this same morning, each student was handed an envelope containing the following circular letter addressed to himself.

We quote from Reuben's:

MR. REUBEN GREEN:—*Dear Sir:* On the night of the 16th there was displayed on Osborn Hall a canvas bearing an inscription which was in the highest degree offensive, and probably intended to be so, to the faculty of this college. It was an insult which every student, not concerned in the disgraceful transaction, should be eager to repudiate, and you are requested to state in writing whether or not you have any knowledge of the matter. A reply is requested not later than the 26th.

(Signed)

THE FACULTY OF YALE.

This communication troubled Reuben exceedingly, and on meeting Roy a few hours later, he said:

"If the fellows will release me from my promise I'll own up to my share of the transaction, and take what they choose to give me, like a man."

"That would be the same as signing your own letter of expulsion, old fellow."

"I know it; but almost anything is better than showing myself to be such a coward."

"No person can know it if every one of us keeps his mouth closed."

Reuben did not view the matter in that light; but he understood it would be useless to bring Roy to his way of thinking, and the matter was dropped to discuss the more exciting topic of the coming battle.

Ample time had been given by the faculty for the students to think the matter over before replying to the circular letters, consequently Reuben believed he could afford to dismiss the subject from his mind for a few days.

During the following forty-eight hours the visitors to the gymnasium found Billy actively engaged in practice with a professor of the "manly art," and every fellow urged him to do his best, for all were eager to see a well-contested battle rather than a well-deserved chastisement.

Reuben remained scrupulously away from the place, stoutly refusing Jack's proposition that he put the gloves on in his own room once or twice.

He still insisted that he should have been ready when the challenge was given, and could not honorably receive any instruction now.

Fully an hour before the time appointed for the "mill," the gymnasium was filled to overflowing with students, who had come to the rendezvous singly and by devious ways in order that no suspicion of what was about to take

place should be aroused in the minds of the officers of the institution.

Jack and Roy had attended to their portion of the work in the most approved fashion.

An eighteen-foot ring was up, and a stranger would have said that all preparations had been made for a struggle between professionals.

When Reuben arrived he looked around curiously, for it was the first time he had been inside the building, and on seeing the crowd, regretted sincerely having agreed to anything of the kind.

He was to punish Billy, if possible, not to give an exhibition; but the letter had been returned to him; the public acknowledgment of the forgery made, and all his demands acceded to, consequently there was nothing left but to carry out the programme as arranged by Jack and Roy.

Billy was on hand, bright and smiling as a new three-cent piece; the lessons received gave him great hopes he would be able to turn the tables, and instead of getting a flogging, give one to the fellow whom he had injured.

He was clad in rowing tights, and certainly looked fit to hold the freshman in check.

Reuben had made no preparations for the fray, intending simply to remove his coat and vest; but against this Jack protested so strenuously that he finally consented to put on a pair of knickerbockers, and take off his outside shirt.

Then the two entered the ring, one of the sophomores acting as master of ceremonies, and time was called.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes," from Reuben.

"Let her go!" from the confident Billy.

"Time!"

The great "mill" was begun without further delay.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MAD SUFFERING.

At the outset Reuben found himself hampered to a certain extent by the gloves.

His hands looked so large and awkward that he felt positive he could not use them as readily as if they were bare, and this sensation gave Billy a momentary advantage.

Instead of waiting to be attacked, the joker pressed the fighting, probably because of the instructions given by his tutor, who was numbered among the spectators, and for an instant Reuben was forced against the ropes with quite as much as he could do to defend himself.

To his great delight, Billy succeeded in landing one blow on the freshman's cheek with sufficient force to make the latter stagger, and then he felt confident the battle would end in his favor.

This attack was exactly what Reuben needed to arouse him from the partial daze into which he had fallen on seeing so many spectators, and before the three-minute round was ended, he had "felt" of his antagonist sufficiently to know what he was worth.

When time was called for the second round Billy came up with a swagger which told exactly what he thought, and before he really understood that the business had

begun, Reuben sent him against the ropes with a blow on the nose which brought "color" in no small quantity.

Had the freshman been so disposed he could have ended the struggle then and there, for Billy was still on his feet, but so confused that he could hardly have raised his hands in defense.

Reuben, however, did not wish to conclude matters so quickly.

Since he had been favored with an audience without any knowledge that spectators were to be allowed, he believed it only right they should be amused, and, besides, the longer he allowed his antagonist to remain in the ring, the greater would be the latter's punishment.

He knew positively that he could polish Billy off whenever he felt so disposed, therefore, instead of following up his advantage, he allowed the dazed joker time to recover his wind and senses.

Billy was thoroughly angry now, and after ten or fifteen seconds made another rush at the freshman, on this occasion forgetting all the science which his tutor had endeavored to drill into him.

Reuben met his adversary with a left-hander under the chin, which sent the joker "to grass" just as the time-keeper announced the end of the round.

Billy was not seriously injured, but scrambled to his feet quickly, and on retiring to his corner Roy whispered:

"You'll make a terrible show of yourself if you're not careful. What do you mean by forcing the fighting when he's the best man?"

"I don't know whether he is or not," Billy growled.

"I reckon I'll show him a thing or two before this scrap is over."

"You won't do it by such foolish rushes. It seems as if a four-year-old child would know better than to do that without paying attention to a guard."

"I understand what I'm about," Billy said, angrily.

"All right, then I won't say anything more; but this you may be sure of, that he's only playing with you now."

If Billy had been willing to take advice he would not have suffered quite so much in the next round; but instead of listening to Roy he pursued the same tactics, and the natural result was that he received a stinger in the eye which promised to close that useful member in short order.

It seemed to the spectators as if Reuben simply stood still and hit his antagonist wherever and whenever he chose during the remainder of this round.

It was apparent to every one that the freshman could spar "all around" Billy, and the students cheered him to the echo because he was willing to give them prolonged sport.

When Billy responded again to the call of time he was more wary.

Roy had not burdened him with advice; but the punishment received warned him that he had made a mistake, and he changed from the offensive to the defensive.

Reuben accepted the challenge in good style.

He led off with a right-hander, which Billy parried successfully, and followed it with a left, straight from the

shoulder, which floored his opponent as if he had been struck with a sledge hammer.

Billy was so long in regaining his feet that the master of ceremonies would have awarded the victory to the freshman, but the latter cried sharply:

"I don't want anything of that kind. I didn't come here simply to see which was the best man, for I fancied I knew that; but to punish him for what he did. When Mr. Moore is ready to beg my pardon in the presence of all hands, I'm willing to stop, but not before."

"I'll see you hanged first!" Billy cried, in a rage. "Don't think you're going to have this all your own way, for I can stand a good deal more."

This speech was received by the spectators with applause, for by it they understood that the battle, which had seemed at an end, was to be continued, and Jack whispered to his principal:

"Give it to him slower for a while. There's no question about winding him up when you get ready, and it will do him good if you play around him."

During the next three rounds Reuben followed this advice, striking Billy when he pleased, but delivering no blows with sufficient force to knock him out.

As a matter of course these tactics only served to still further enrage the discomfited joker, and he rushed about the ring in the most reckless manner.

A novice in the business could have floored him half-a-dozen times in each round; but Reuben held back until he thought the spectators had had amusement enough, and then he began business in earnest.

A right and left-hander in rapid succession sent Billy "to grass" five seconds after time was called, and as he attempted to rise, Reuben knocked him down again, taking good care, however, not to strike until he had regained his feet.

Four times did the joker fall before the superior skill and strength of the freshman from Maine, and then he was as thoroughly a whipped fellow as could be found in a day's journey.

"I'll give it up!" he cried, waving his hands frantically to prevent Reuben from approaching with one of those swinging blows which had gone home with such force.

"Are you willing to beg his pardon?" Jack cried.

"I'll do anything if he'll let me alone," and now Billy's anger had given way to most abject fear.

"Then do it like a man, and we'll try to patch you up so you can get back to your room."

This was a bitter pill for the practical joker; but Reuben was standing in the center of the ring ready to resume hostilities in case he failed to comply with the demand, and he stepped toward him meekly.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Green."

"For what?" Reuben asked, sternly.

"For all I did."

"I want you to explain what it was, otherwise the spectators might think I took this means of paying you off for your jokes."

Billy choked back a sob which would persist in rising in his throat, and said, in a low tone:

"I beg your pardon for stealing the letter, and for trying to make you believe your girl wrote the one I mailed."

"That will do," Reuben replied, grimly, "and although I believe this lesson is enough to prevent you from trying such things in the future, I want to warn you that while I am willing to stand anything in the way of fun without so much as yipping, when it comes to matters of this kind again, it won't be here with gloves, but wherever I can lay my hands on you."

Billy turned quickly and went back to his corner to wash the blood from his face, while Reuben, who did not have so much as a scratch on his body, proceeded to dress himself.

The victor was literally overwhelmed with congratulations; but to them all he replied:

"There was no honor to be gained by such an encounter, for Moore can't spar a little bit. I didn't suppose it was to be a regular battle before spectators, or I should have refused to meet him here; but having agreed, there was nothing left but to live up to my promises, and I reckon I have shown him that he must be careful in the future."

"There's no question about that. I don't believe he'll try another practical joke this season," Jack replied, with a laugh. Then he added, in a lower tone, to Reuben: "I've invited a few fellows to my room for a spread, and told them you'd be there."

"I had rather go back to my own quarters. It looks too much like a prize-fighter's way, to parade around just now."

"Nonsense, the fellows will expect you, and it won't do to disappoint them. There isn't one who wasn't glad to see Billy get his just reward. He has been up to his tricks ever since he came here, but never before attempted anything so serious, and what he received was earned long ago. Come on, for I sha'n't excuse you."

Thus it was that Reuben was led, against his will, to Jack's "spread," and there he was introduced to many of the students whom he had not met before.

The "few fellows" numbered thirty at the very least, and although Jack had spoken of it in such a modest manner, there was a veritable feast sent up from the caterer's.

As a matter of course the conversation was, during the first hour, devoted wholly to Billy and the battle, after which came the question of the circular letter.

It so chanced that every fellow present had been concerned in the banner raising, and Reuben said when the subject was broached:

"You gentlemen saw fit to exact from me a promise that I would deny all knowledge of the affair in case I was questioned. That promise I am ready to keep to the letter; but at the same time I ask that you release me from it."

"What for?" Jack asked, in dismay.

"Because I must reply to the letter, and I had rather make a clean breast of the affair so far as I am concerned. It can be done without implicating any one else, and I shall have some respect for myself."

"You're crazy!" Roy cried.

"I don't think so."

“But expulsion is certain if you admit that you helped hang it.”

“I can't prevent that. The only question now is whether you will release me from my promise if I agree not to drag any other fellow into the scrape?”

The guests looked at each other questioningly.

It surely seemed as if Reuben wanted to do a very foolish thing; but he had shown himself to be one who deserved respect, and each fellow felt a certain hesitation about refusing to grant the modest request.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TRAITOR.

Reuben's request perplexed those to whom it had been referred.

All present believed their only chance for escaping from the consequences of Billy's foolish prank was by remaining silent, and if one should confess, it would be possible for the guilty parties to be discovered with but little trouble.

At the same time Reuben was so earnest regarding the matter, and felt the disgrace of telling an absolute falsehood so keenly, that it seemed wrong to restrain him.

Both Roy and Jack tried to argue him out of what the latter called a "crazy idea;" but he had a ready answer for everything they advanced, and the result was that Jack finally appealed to his guests by saying:

"You have heard what Plain Reuben asks for, and the question now to be decided is whether we shall release him from the promise he was forced to make?"

"I would suggest that he give us sufficient time in which to think the matter over," Sam Hovey said, addressing Jack as though he was the chairman of the meeting. "The faculty have postponed the answering of the letters so long that we have plenty of time."

"Who can say how soon I may be called upon by one

of the professors, or even the dean himself?" Reuben interrupted. "We now know the subject hasn't been allowed to drop, and it stands a fellow in hand to be prepared."

Henry Bolton, a member of the senior class, made a proposition which seemed to offer a solution to the vexed question.

"I propose," he said, "that we give Plain Reuben permission to do as he wishes, under certain restrictions; as for instance, in case he should be placed in such a position where it would seem to him absolutely necessary to confess his share in the business, then he is at liberty to do as he thinks best; but he must not answer the circular letter yet, nor voluntarily acknowledge his part in the banner racket under the existing circumstances. We have seen enough of him to know he is a fellow of good, sound, common sense, although a trifle green, both in name and nature, and we can, I think, trust him to live up to the spirit of this second agreement."

"Such an arrangement will suit me, providing it is not understood that this is final as regards the answer which must be made in writing. That we can discuss later."

The remainder of the company appeared to be satisfied with this disposition of the case, and Reuben was more at ease than he had been since the promise was exacted.

It was not until a late hour that the party broke up, and from his room Billy Moore could see them as they crossed the campus.

He had sought the seclusion of his own apartment im-

mediately after the battle was over, and placed himself in the charge of his fistic tutor for repairs.

That gentleman was what is known as a "bruiser," and had no other connection with the college than to teach the young gentlemen the "manly art" when especially engaged by them so to do.

None of the students treated him as an equal, for his manner as well as his regular associates forbade anything of the kind; but on this evening Billy would have taken to his heart almost any one who would not have roughed into him in regard to his defeat.

Ben Gouge was the gentleman's name, and, anticipating a fat fee for his services, he had been most attentive.

He bathed Billy's swollen face, applied hot lotions to the rapidly discoloring eyes, and accompanied the work with running commentaries on the fight:

"If that countryman never took no lessons, he's a corker. The way he put up his props when you was makin' them 'ere wild rushes what I warned you agin, was a caution."

"It wasn't science, but brute strength," Billy snarled.

"I ain't so bloomin' certain 'bout that," was the cautious reply. "A lad has got to know somethin' in the way of handlin' his props, no matter how big he is. Why, look 'ere, Billy, I've seed a little chap what was up to all the dodges get away with a cove twice his weight afore you could wag yer-ear, an' not half try at that."

"I don't care to hear about such things just now. Is my eye going to be very black?"

"I should say as how you'd have to nuss it in private

for three days, an' then there won't be much to show. It's this 'ere cut under the jaw that'll hold on the longest. 'Pears like as if he chewed you wherever he took a notion."

"Of course he did; but that was because I got hot. Just wait a while, and I'll show him what I can do. You shall give me lessons right straight along, Ben, and the day you say I'm fit, I'll pick a row with him."

"That's right, my bantam; never say die," Mr. Gouge replied, enthusiastically, thinking more of the money he would receive than of making such unpromising material. "There's one thing you've got to keep in your hat all the time, which is: Never lose your head. There's where so many fiddle right out jest as soon as a man stands up agin' 'em."

"I don't think I did so very badly, considering his size and superior knowledge."

"Of course not. Of course not. Hold still while I patch up this 'ere cut on your cheek. That countryman could sling a mighty nasty fist when he tried."

It was after the last bruise had been attended to that Billy, sitting near the window, could see the merry-makers returning to their several apartments.

"There he goes, the duffer! and I suppose thinks he has done a great thing in making me beg his pardon before all that crowd; but I'll take him down a peg or two before next summer."

"That's the way to talk, my hearty!" Mr. Gouge replied, believing his pupil was referring to the time when,

under his able instruction, he would be able to stand up like a man in front of the fellow whom he had wronged.

"I'll serve him a trick within the next twenty-four hours that will fix matters. He's pledged not to tell a certain thing, and is just fool enough to keep the promise under any circumstances. It won't be very hard to get rid of him at once."

"Now what'er you rattlin' 'bout?"

"Nothing very important. Say, Ben, suppose I wanted a note sent to the dean, could you find some one who would deliver it?"

"What's the matter wid my doin' it?"

"I don't want him to know who sent it. Some fellow who knows you've been training me might see you, and then the jig would be up."

"There's the post office, an' a two-cent stamp don't cost much."

"I had rather the letter should be delivered to him personally, as if it had come from somebody in the town."

"Look here," Mr. Gouge said, sternly, "is this 'ere business a funny fake like wot you had to 'pologize for?"

"No, it's all straight enough, and there's two dollars in it for you if you can deliver the letter in proper shape."

"I'm the boy wot wants to ketch on to all them chances; but, Billy, I can't afford to do any dirty work, 'cause you see I manage to pick up a livin' outer the young gentlemen of this 'ere college, an' they'd go back on me quicker'n scat if I went crooked."

Billy's cheek reddened at the thought that he was willing to do what this bruiser considered beneath himself;

but he banished the unwelcome comparison, and replied, with considerable show of dignity:

“You know very well that I wouldn’t stoop to anything mean. If you understood the matter about which that country Jake and I had the row, you’d know I wasn’t to be blamed.”

“That’s all right, Mr. Moore. I didn’t go for to sinerwate things warn’t all square an’ aboveboard. Tell me what you want done, an’ I’ll see it’s ’tended to in great shape.”

“Come here to-morrow morning, and I’ll have a letter ready, which must be delivered to the dean by some one in the city who isn’t known around the college.”

“It won’t be very hard to do that. Shall I stay any longer?”

“No; here’s a fiver for what has been done, and two more when you take the letter.”

Mr. Gouge placed the five-dollar note carelessly in his pocket, as if money was a minor object with him, and took his departure, saying to himself as he reached the street:

“Billy Moore is a reg’lar little duffer, an’ if he ain’t up to some dirty trick this very minute my name’s Dennis, which I don’t think it is.”

And, as a matter of fact, Billy was “up to some dirty trick.”

As soon as his tutor had gone he began experimenting with his pen, regardless of the sorrow his previous efforts in this direction had brought upon him, until he succeeded in adopting a certain style which satisfied him.

"I reckon that will do the business," he said to himself, as he settled down for work. "Now we'll see what can be done with that chump from Maine, and this time it'll be hard work for him to prove I had a finger in the pie. I went about the letter to Matilda in such a bald-headed way that almost any fool would have tumbled to the racket."

His desk was supplied with several styles of writing paper, and, selecting one such as would be used by a business man, he wrote the following, disguising his penmanship in a thorough manner:

RESPECTED SIR:—As a citizen of this town I am naturally interested in the welfare of Yale College, which is my only excuse for seeming to meddle with what does not concern me.

As a matter of course, the townspeople hear more or less of the gossip from the college, and I understand that the perpetrators of the dastardly outrage of Tuesday night have not been discovered. I did hope that the students would have gentlemanly instinct enough to confess when called upon, and have therefore held my tongue until now.

I know one who was concerned in the matter, for I crossed the campus at the time when he was boasting to an acquaintance of what he had done. This culprit I heard called by the name of Reuben, and from inquiries I learn he is in the freshman class, having lately come from Maine.

Yours very respectfully,

A FRIEND TO YALE.

"I reckon that will do the business," Billy said, with a chuckle of satisfaction as he folded the sheet and placed it in the envelope. "Now we'll see who laughs last."

CHAPTER XXV.

A SUMMONS FROM THE DEAN.

Reuben felt more at ease in mind after being partially relieved from his promise regarding the banner, than at any time since his arrival.

He firmly believed, however, that if his connection with the matter was known he would be expelled, but at the same time he was resolved to suffer this disgrace rather than tell a falsehood.

"It'll be pretty tough on Matilda and the old folks," he said to himself, the evening Billy had made ready to wreak his revenge, "but there's no use trying to dodge what it seems to me is bound to come out before this term is ended."

That he was no longer in danger of being hazed seemed certain, for all the students appeared to be on the most friendly terms with him, and since the exhibition in the gymnasium he might count on being popular with very many who had not previously shown him any attention. If he could have seen the bomb which Billy had prepared for his discomfiture, it is not probable he would have slept so soundly on this night, but, fortunately, he was ignorant concerning it, and rested secure in the belief that, so far as his classmates were concerned, he had nothing to fear,

He never dreamed that Billy Moore would descend so low as to seek such a mean revenge after having been worsted in a battle which justice demanded he should lose.

That young gentleman, however, was more eager for vengeance on the following morning than the night previous, if such a thing could be possible.

One glance in the mirror at his disfigured face was sufficient to rouse his anger to the boiling point, and he said to himself:

"After that letter has been delivered the Green chump from Aurora won't feel quite so cocky about his performance with the gloves. I'll be even with him between now and night if Ben Gouge does his part."

The teacher of the manly art had no intention of losing the two dollars which had been promised for the slight service of delivering a letter to the dean, and Billy had not yet made a thorough examination of his bruises when the slugger entered the room.

"Well, how is it this mornin'? A leetle sore, I reckon."

"Yes, I am," Billy replied, savagely; "but that's no reason why you should crow over me."

"Why, bless yer eyes, lad, I never thought of doin' any such things! You know very well he wouldn't have pounded you up like this if I'd had my way, an' you could a-got away from a good bit of it if you hadn't lost your head."

"Well, supposing I could, that's no reason why you should keep reminding me of it."

Mr. Gouge shrugged his shoulders as if to say that it

was useless to waste fair words on such an irritable fellow, and stood leaning negligently against the table awaiting his patron's orders.

"Don't you think these bruises need some attention?" Billy finally asked, after a long pause.

"That's for you to say, lad. If you count on goin' out——"

"You know very well I wouldn't be such a fool as to do that while I'm in this condition."

"Won't you have to make some excuses?"

"I shall say I'm sick, and it comes mighty near being the truth."

"That's the way I counted its bein' fixed, an' only showed up this mornin' because you said somethin' about a letter last night. Do you still want it sent?"

"Of course I do, stupid. You said you could have it delivered by some one who was not known around here."

"There's a chap at my place what jest come to the city yesterday, an' he'll do the job in great shape."

"Then give him this; tell him to put it in the dean's hands, and leave before any questions can be asked."

"All right, but there was somethin' else you spoke about."

"You mean the two dollars for the work. Well, here it is, and considering the length of time required to earn it, you can well afford to hold your tongue in regard to the matter."

"Did you ever know me to go back on a friend?" Mr. Gouge asked, in an aggrieved tone, as he shoved the

money carelessly into his pocket. "You can count on my livin' right up to orders."

"Don't come back to the college grounds to-day, for fear there may be some suspicion. To call this morning was all right, for it would be only natural you should want to know how I was getting along. Send your friend as soon as possible, and then let him keep away from here."

Mr. Gouge was now positive his patron was engaging him to do "dirty work," but so long as he had been well paid for the service, he had no idea of making a remonstrance.

He waited a few seconds to learn if his employer had further orders, and as Billy turned away with a gesture of impatience, he left the room.

Even now, when he was fully committed to the cowardly act, Billy felt no qualms of conscience. His only desire was to revenge himself on Reuben, no matter what might be the future cost.

Quite unintentionally he had been the means of enlisting the sympathies of all the students in behalf of the freshman from Maine, and this cut deeper in his mind than had the blows on his body.

Meanwhile Reuben had no lack of callers on the morning after the "mill" at the gymnasium, and it was great satisfaction for him to hear their friendly words after having so long been the butt of their jokes.

Thanks to his industry, he made a very creditable showing during the recitations of the forenoon, and re-

turned to his apartment after dinner feeling that, perhaps, by some unknown agency, he might succeed in escaping scot-free from the results of his folly in aiding Billy hang the offensive banner.

This hope was destined to die very suddenly, for on entering the room the first object which attracted his attention was a letter on the table addressed to himself.

The contents immediately plunged him into a very uncomfortable frame of mind.

It was a request from the dean that he call upon that gentleman at seven o'clock in the evening.

The language was courteous, but yet Reuben felt instinctively that the interview would be confined to the insult offered the faculty.

"They have found out that I was fool enough to be mixed up in the senseless joke, and most likely I shall receive a polite invitation to go home."

Jack Dudley came in while he still held the missive in his hand, staring at it as if he fancied there was more to be seen on the written page than was at first apparent.

"You look as if somebody had sent a dunning letter, and you didn't know where to get the cash," Jack said, as he threw himself negligently into an easy-chair.

"It is very much like that," Reuben replied, ruefully; "I suppose you might call it a debt which I owe, and the payment is going to be mighty hard."

He handed his visitor the letter, and Jack's face grew very pale as he read it.

"They've found out!" he exclaimed after a long pause.

"There's no question about that."

"What's to be done?"

"I reckon the time has come when I must step up to the dough trough."

"Has Billy received anything like this?"

"I don't know. I haven't seen Moore since last night, and sha'n't feel very bad if I never see him again. Although I got the best of him, I am still sore over his stealing my letter."

"And I don't blame you. But look here, Reuben, the rest of the fellows must know about this before you see the dean. Do you care if I tell them?"

"Of course not; I'd like to hear what they've got to say in regard to it, though there's no chance they can do me any good."

Jack took his departure hurriedly, returning half an hour later with a dozen or more fellows, all of whom looked very serious.

No one save Reuben knew exactly what should be done, and he could see no other course than free confession.

"But it will eventually bring us all into the mess," Roy exclaimed.

"I don't see how it can be helped. The fact of my having received this summons shows that my part in the affair is known, and I've got to take the consequences."

"What shall you tell him?"

"The truth; but under no consideration will I give the names of my accomplices."

“Very likely he’ll make that the terms upon which you can remain, and a fellow is willing to do almost anything rather than be expelled.”

“It isn’t so with me. I would go a hundred times rather than give any fellow away. After I am disciplined, I reckon they’ll be willing to let the matter drop.”

“Don’t be so positive. We’ll come in for a wiggling, and, as soon as you confess, all that’s necessary is to find out who was with you on that particular night.”

“You don’t think I should deny any knowledge of the affair, do you?” Reuben asked in alarm.

“No, you’ll have to work it out as you propose, I suppose; but it’ll come tough on the rest of us just the same.”

“If you think it will make a big lot of trouble, I’ll simply refuse to speak. It won’t be any worse being expelled for that than for what I did, and I’m willing to act as you fellows think best.”

This proposition was followed by an exciting discussion, some few of those present seeming to think Reuben ought not confess, but Jack put an end to it by saying:

“It would be foolish to stand like a mummy, and refuse to open your mouth, for then the dean would know as well that you were guilty as if you had owned up to the whole job. I say, go ahead and do exactly as you think best. We were in the scrape, and ought to have backbone enough to bear the consequences.”

This opinion was shared by the majority, and the un-

happy freshman could not but consider himself at liberty to do as he pleased.

There was mighty little consolation in that, however, and the hours which intervened until the time appointed for the interview were about as unpleasant as any Reuben ever spent.

CHAPTER XXVI.

INTERVIEWED BY THE DEAN.

If words could be of any benefit, Reuben must have been greatly strengthened in mind when he left his room to meet the dean.

Every fellow, with the single exception of Billy Moore, who had been concerned in the banner raising, felt it incumbent upon himself to say something in the way of encouragement when the freshman started.

"Keep your upper lip stiff, old man," Jack said, as he shook him by the hand vigorously. "Remember that it can't last forever, and you'll be better off than the rest of us, because you'll know in advance just what the sentence is, while we must be kept in suspense considerably longer."

"Don't get into the dumps; we'll all stand at your back, whatever happens," Roy whispered, and Reuben, looking much as if he was about to assist at his own funeral, started out.

His coming was confidently expected, as could be told from the fact that in answer to his summons at the door he was ushered at once into the dean's library, where that gentleman sat like, as Reuben thought, a big spider waiting for foolish flies.

"Take a seat, Mr. Green," the dean said, gravely, as

he motioned toward a chair, which had been placed in such a manner that the light would shine directly in the visitor's face, while the old gentleman was partially shrouded in darkness.

Reuben sat down, and tried very hard to still the nervous tremor which caused his hands to tremble like one with a malarial chill.

He mentally braced himself for the disagreeable examination, and had not long to wait before the "inquisition" was begun.

"Have you yet answered the letter which was sent you, sir?" the dean asked.

"No, sir. I understood from it that a reply was not necessary until after a certain length of time, and I have been very busy."

"Do you think a gentleman who was innocent of having participated in the disgraceful proceedings at Osborn Hall would delay denying any knowledge of the matter?"

"I don't know what others might do, sir. I can only speak for myself."

"And you did not think it of sufficient importance to prevent you from attending to other matters first?"

"There were certain reasons, which I cannot explain, why I have delayed."

"Are you willing to answer it now, verbally?"

"I am, sir."

"Then allow me to ask the question: Were you directly or indirectly concerned in hanging a certain piece of canvas bearing an offensive inscription, on the balcony of Osborn Hall?"

"I was, sir," and Reuben did his best to prevent the tremor in his voice.

"Directly or indirectly?"

"Directly, sir. In fact, I was one who put it up."

The dean was silent for several seconds, and then asked, in an injured tone, which cut Reuben more than harsh words would have done:

"Why should you want to offer such an insult to the instructors in this college? Had you ever met any of them?"

"No, sir. I don't think it was intended as an insult. It was simply the result of a frolic, and I know that I for one never thought how it might be taken."

"You surely realized you were transgressing the rules of the institution?"

"Certainly."

"Who painted the inscription on the canvas?"

"That I cannot tell, sir."

"Because you are ignorant?"

"No, sir; but because I am not willing to inform against another who does not choose to confess."

"Do you know what your silence will probably cost you?"

"I believe I shall be expelled."

"And have you no care for such a disgrace?"

"Indeed I have. I would cheerfully bear any other punishment rather than that, but if the price of being dealt less severely with is to be the implicating of those who were with me, then I prefer to take the full dose—I mean, the greatest punishment."

"And you refuse to reveal anything?"

"I can say no more than I have. I helped hang the banner, and suppose my guilt is the greatest."

Again the dean remained silent a short time, during which Reuben nestled about in the chair as if he was sitting on pins.

"Would you have confessed this much if I had not sent for you?"

"I should, sir. The fellows just released me from my prom—I mean I should most certainly have done so," Reuben replied, checking himself in time, as he thought, to prevent the dean from understanding why he had not acknowledged the fault before.

"When did you feel at liberty to speak?"

"Last evening; but it was not to be until the final day of grace afforded by your letter."

"While you were engaged in this cowardly attack upon the faculty, did you see any of the townspeople, or have you spoken to your comrades where the citizens might hear you?"

"No, sir," Reuben replied, in surprise, wondering why such questions should be asked.

"Are you quite positive in regard to that?"

"I am. On the night when the banner was hung we came very near being caught by the watchman, and I know no one saw us. Since then the matter has been discussed only in our own quarters."

"It is right that I should explain why I wished for such information. Here is a letter I received this morning, and it explains why I sent for you."

He handed Reuben the missive which had been prepared by Billy, and the freshman gazed at it in open-mouthed astonishment.

"You see it is anonymous, consequently I have every right to show it to you. There can be no question but that some of your party are willing to play the traitor, hence your desire to shield the others is a mistaken kindness, since at least one of them is eager you shall suffer. Now, will you give me the whole history of that affair?"

"So far as revealing the names of those who were with me is concerned, I cannot. It would be the act of a coward and a sneak."

"And yet your refusal to do so will be attended with very serious consequences to yourself."

"I am aware of that, sir, and still I refuse."

"Very well, sir," and now the dean spoke sternly. "It is for you to choose, and me to uphold the dignity of this institution. You are suspended until a thorough investigation can be had, and I do not doubt but that we shall feel obliged to publicly expel you."

This seemed to Reuben sufficient intimation that the interview was at an end, and he said, as he arose to his feet:

"It gives me great pain, sir, and will also inflict suffering on those who care for me, but I should have realized it at the time, and since I did not, can only blame myself. Would you have any objection to loaning me that letter?"

"Why should I give you even such slight information as is contained in it when you refuse to make public a secret which would be better revealed than kept?"

Reuben made no reply.

Even though he had expected to be expelled immediately, and had only been suspended, the fact that he was in disgrace made his heart very heavy.

He bowed to the dean, and went out of the house, he knew not how, finding the way back to his own apartments like one in a dream.

As might have been expected, nearly all of those concerned in the matter were awaiting his arrival in order to learn what had been done, and instantly on entering the room he was overwhelmed with questions.

Each fellow tried to speak at the same time, and not until something like order had been restored could he tell his story.

Then he repeated in regular order the entire conversation, concluding by asking:

“Now, who do you suppose sent that anonymous letter?”

Strange as it may seem, no one thought it could be Billy's work.

He had always been ready to play a practical joke, but his acquaintances could not accuse him of a mean act, and, besides, Reuben's ruin would very likely involve him.

Excitedly the young gentlemen discussed this strange phase of the case, but without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion.

“There's one thing certain,” Sam said, with emphasis, “whoever has been sneak enough will have to leave this college.”

“But it couldn't have been any of the students,” Roy

added. "There isn't one here so mean as to do such a thing!"

"At all events it stands us in hand to ferret out the mystery, and if Jack Dudley will join me, I'm willing to spend my entire time playing detective," said Sam.

"I'll do anything," Jack replied, promptly. "We must know who has done it, but I'm certain it was an outsider."

"Whoever it is shall suffer, if it's in my power to make him," and Roy shook his fist at the empty air in a most vindictive manner.

The remainder of the party were of the same opinion, and all believed that Jack and Sam would be able to compass the desired end if they pursued the matter.

"We won't slack up if it takes all winter," Sam said. "Suppose somebody finds out what Billy thinks of it. He ought to know how the cat is jumping."

"Of course he had. Who has seen him to-day?" Roy asked.

"I was in his room this forenoon," Bolton replied. "He is pretty sore in both mind and body, and allows that the time will come when he'll be able to square matters with you, Reuben."

"I fixed up my accounts, but if he wants more I'll try not to disappoint him. There's nothing now to prevent my taking a few lessons, and I'm going to hire Billy's tutor for a while. Not that it'll do me any good here," he added, bitterly, "for I'm homeward bound; but it may be that Moore will want to see me before I leave the city."

"I fancy you can give a good account of yourself with-

out further instruction," Jack said with a laugh, "but if you are really thinking of hiring Ben Gouge I'll send him up when I go downtown."

"All right, I wish you would. Now that I'm suspended I shall have plenty of time for practice."

CHAPTER XXVII.

BEN GOUGE.

Not until Reuben's friends had departed, leaving him alone in the room which he believed he would be obliged to vacate so soon, did he fully realize the significance of all that had occurred.

Matilda had been so proud, because he was "going to Yale." How would she feel now that he had been sent home in disgrace?

His father had set aside a certain sum of money which he needed in his business, in order that Reuben might receive a thorough education, and how was he to be repaid for his goodness?

These two questions the unhappy freshman asked himself over and over without being able to make any satisfactory reply, and for the time being it seemed as if the sorrow and disgrace was more than he could bear.

Wild plans of going to sea, trying to find a situation in New York, or engaging in any pursuit which would yield sufficient to provide him with the bare necessities of life, passed through his mind, until finally sleep came to his relief, and trouble was banished for the time being.

While he was thus blissfully unconscious, Jack and Sam began their detective work, or, rather, intended to do so as soon as they could give Billy the latest news.

Despite the fact that he had been engaged in a mean and disgraceful transaction, they did not propose to cut him from their list of acquaintances, because it seemed as if he had been sufficiently punished for his misdeeds.

They found the victim of Reuben's just wrath looking decidedly the worse for wear, and sitting in a big arm-chair which had been drawn close to the fire, although the night was not particularly cold.

His face yet bore most unmistakable marks of the late "unpleasantness," and he was so stiff and lame that it was absolutely impossible for him to move around, save at the expense of considerable pain.

"Sort of used up, eh?" Sam said, with a smile, as he entered the room.

"Of course I ain't! Who's been telling that yarn?" Billy cried, angrily; but he made no attempt to rise to his feet.

"No one that I know of. A blind man could see that you wasn't quite as chipper as a sparrow, and, as I happened to be at the gymnasium last night, I had good reason for thinking you might be under the weather," Sam replied, sharply, not fancying the tone in which Billy spoke.

"Now, don't you two quarrel," Jack cried. "There is no reason why you should feel ugly at what has happened, Moore, for you must confess that you deserved a great deal more."

"I don't feel called upon to confess anything," Billy snarled. "What right has that chump to come around here saying what shall or shall not be done?"

"A good deal more than you had to steal his letter, and imitate his girl's handwriting. If we hadn't taken a hand in the matter you'd be worse off now than you are."

"Then I could have had him arrested for assault and battery; but, by following your senseless advice, I've cut myself out of all that."

"Would you have had the nerve to do such a thing, Billy Moore? After all the practical jokes you have played, it would have looked well to see you going into court because one of them didn't work just to suit you!"

"Is that all you came here to talk about?" the victim asked, impatiently, "because if it is there won't be any need of your staying very long. I don't choose to discuss the matter with his cronies."

"Now, see here, Billy," and it was Jack's turn to speak sharply, "if you keep on in this way it won't take me very long to make up my mind what I had better do. If you hadn't taken your punishment properly, I wouldn't be seen speaking to you, for it was a dirty trick you played on Reuben, and I would say the same, no matter who did it. Considering the fact that the thing ought to be rubbed out, because of what you stood up to, I'm willing to look upon the matter as if it had never happened; but don't think the boys won't rough into you about it. You must expect considerable chaff, and the best way is to take it with a good grace."

"So you thought it your duty to read me a lecture, inasmuch as I couldn't help myself, but would be obliged to sit still and listen?"

"We didn't come here for anything of the kind, but

simply to tell you what was going on, thinking you might be interested, and wanting to do you a good turn; but if you choose to act like a cat with a bone in her throat the sooner we go away the better."

This had the effect of quieting the invalid down a trifle, more especially after he saw Sam move toward the door as if to take his departure, and he said, in what he intended should be a friendly tone:

"You shouldn't blame me for feeling mighty rough about what has happened, even if I did bring it on myself as you say. It came pretty hard to have to beg his pardon before all that crowd after I'd been pounded and banged around as I was."

"I understand that, of course; but you only make a bad matter worse by letting fellows see how much you take it to heart. The best way is to come out bright and smiling, and if you want another go at Reuben, have it like a man; but I don't think you'll get the chance, for he's likely to leave here very soon."

"So the dean sent for him, eh?" Billy cried, excitedly.

"Why, how did you know?" Sam asked, in surprise.

"I? Oh, I didn't!" Billy stammered, realizing that he had made an incautious remark. "Of course, I thought—that is, it seemed natural—I mean we had reason to expect some one of the crowd would be called up before his highness, since no one confessed," and the invalid's face grew very red, as he saw that the eyes of his visitors were still fixed upon him in surprise.

"Why should it have been Reuben more than you or I?" Jack asked.

"There's no particular reason," and Billy made a great effort to speak in a careless tone, "only it seemed as if there could be no other explanation after you said he was likely to go away very soon."

It was some seconds before Jack spoke again, and then he said:

"Well, it so chances that the dean did send for Reuben, and while he confessed to his share of the transaction, he refused to name a single fellow who was concerned in the affair, although it is more than probable he could have gotten his own neck out of the halter by so doing."

"Who told you that?"

"He did, of course."

"Then you've only got his word for it, and I'd rather have better proof."

This ungenerous remark aroused Jack's ire, and he made no effort to conceal the fact.

"After all that has happened, I don't think such a speech does you much credit. Reuben had to own up to the truth; but he is doing a big thing in trying to shield us. If it hadn't been for the letter——"

"So you've seen it, eh?"

"Seen what?"

"Why, the letter, of course," Billy replied; and, an instant later, he could have bitten his tongue, because of having made such a slip.

"How did you know anything about that?" Sam asked, quickly.

"Didn't Jack just speak about it? Isn't that enough to

let me know there was a letter mixed up in the business?" and again Billy's face grew red.

"Well, there was a letter," Jack continued, keeping his eyes fixed intently on the invalid, "and Reuben had no other course than a free confession, even had he wished to do otherwise. Now that we have told you the news, there is no need of our staying any longer."

Without waiting for ceremony Jack left the room, followed by Sam, and when the two were outside the latter said as he halted:

"Who would have thought Billy Moore had the nerve and meanness to play such a game?"

"Then you think——"

"I won't say what I think yet a while; but it strikes me that we sha'n't have to hunt very far to find the writer of that anonymous letter."

"We mustn't mention it, even to ourselves, until we have proof, and then let him look out."

"You're right. Let's find Ben Gouge, and send him to Reuben; it may be that the freshman will soon want to indulge in another mill."

Half-an-hour later Mr. Gouge knocked at the door of the room occupied by the freshman from Maine, and, on being invited to enter, introduced himself in due form.

"If it so be that you think I can give you any points, I'm willin' to begin whenever you say; but from what I saw the other night it looks as if you'd set me a hard job with the gloves."

“That’s where you make a mistake,” Reuben replied, laughingly. “I want to learn the science of the business, and am ready to commence whenever you are ready.”

“I allow about one lesson a week is what you’re after.”

“Bless your heart, one a day won’t be any too often while I’m suspended, and it may be we sha’n’t have time for a great many at that, for I’m expecting to be expelled.”

“Did the governor get on to the little mill the other night.”

“Oh, it isn’t that! I was with some of the fellows when the banner was hung on Osborn Hall, and one of the townspeople has seen fit to send an anonymous letter to the dean, explaining that I was interested in the sport. I can’t understand who would do such a thing, for I haven’t an enemy in town.”

“So that’s where the letter struck, eh?” Mr. Gouge muttered, half to himself.

“What do you mean?” Reuben asked, quickly.

“Nothin’. Nothin’. I was only thinkin’ about a little affair of my own. Say, Mr. Green, why don’t you come over to the gymnasium now, and have a shy with the gloves to find out how much you know?”

“First tell me what you meant by speaking as you did when I told you about the letter.”

“I was only gibberin’; it’s a way I’ve got. You mustn’t mind a little thing like that.”

“I’ll find out what he meant before I leave him,” Reuben muttered to himself, and then he added aloud: “Very

well, if you insist on learning how little I know, come along; but I shall get the worst of it."

"It looks as if that was the way things was comin' to you now; but there may be a change," and then Mr. Gouge relapsed into silence.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REUBEN'S SUSPENSE.

After he got over the first shock caused by the decree of suspension, Reuben's idea was to bear the disgrace as philosophically as possible.

He reasoned with himself that the faculty must understand he could have had no desire to insult them, since he was almost an entire stranger, therefore his share in the night's performances must be set down simply as a desire to join the others in their sport without stopping to question what it might lead up to.

This view of the case would serve to lessen his offense in the eyes of people generally; but he understood that it would not avail with the officers of the college.

He should have come forward at once and acknowledged his share in the transaction, as he was finally forced to do, and then his plea would have had some weight.

Recognizing the fact that he could do absolutely nothing to better his position, Reuben resolved to occupy his time in the pleasantest way possible, and to this end decided to take a certain number of lessons in the "manly art of self-defense," putting as far from his mind as possible all disagreeable thoughts.

In this he would probably have succeeded admirably but for the remark made by Mr. Gouge.

Preposterous as the idea seemed upon reflection, it certainly appeared as if the bruiser knew something regarding the letter, and this thought filled Reuben's mind to the exclusion of everything else when he entered the gymnasium.

Mr. Gouge was evidently intent on business. He earned his livelihood by teaching the collegians, and had no idea of losing a promising pupil through inattention or carelessness.

The gloves were brought out, and the bruiser fitted Reuben to a pair, saying as he did so:

"I noticed the other night that you paid no attention to this part of the work; but it stands a cove in hand to feel the gloves snug, so he can double his fists without their shaking around."

"I didn't attend to it simply because I knew nothing about them. I never even saw such things before."

"Then all I can say is you'll be the cock of this 'ere college in less'n six weeks. I never saw a feller put up his props more naturally."

"Six weeks! I shall be lucky to stay here six days longer."

"Is it so bad as that?"

"Indeed it is. This suspension business is only the beginning of the end, and I shall receive my walking papers as soon as the faculty get through investigating the matter of the banner-raising."

Gouge shook his head, but said nothing. It was evi-

dent he had something on his mind, and, in the hope of drawing him out, Reuben asked:

"Do you know anything about the affair?"

"In course I knows what's been said 'round town."

"Nothing more?"

"Now, does it stand to reason that I'd know what the young gentlemen here are up to, unless it happens to be a quiet sparring match?"

"I thought you might have a suspicion in regard to the anonymous letter."

"How could I?" Gouge asked, with an assumption of ignorance that was very apparent. "I reckon we come here for exercise, not to chin, so let's get at it."

Reuben understood he could accomplish nothing by trying to gain information while the bruiser was in his present frame of mind, and he forced himself to banish all thoughts, save those connected with the lesson.

During half-an-hour the two sparred, Reuben doing his best, and the teacher forced to defend himself vigorously from the attacks, which were oftentimes made with considerable skill.

"It isn't lessons as much as practice that you want," the bruiser said, as he removed the gloves and wiped the perspiration from his face. "You're a rare hand at it now, an' the pity is you don't have to go into the ring for a living."

Reuben laughed heartily at the idea of his becoming a prize-fighter, and, when his mirth had subsided, Mr. Gouge said, just a trifle impatiently:

"I reckon you think sich things are not rich enough

for your blood; but the greatest man in the world is him who can stand up ag'in all comers, Markis of Queensbury's rules."

"That may be; but there won't be much chance for practice down at Aurora, so instead of bewailing the fact that I don't intend to go into the ring as a profession, suppose we decide on the time for the next lesson?"

"You can suit yourself about that; the young gentlemen allers do."

"Then come to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, and we'll spend an hour here. It is too late for anything more to-night."

Mr. Gouge stood irresolutely an instant, as if on the point of saying something, and then reconsidered his determination, turning quickly and walking out of the building.

When Reuben retired that night it was with the firm conviction that the bruiser could give him considerable information concerning the letter, if he was willing to do so, and the proper course seemed to cultivate his acquaintance as much as possible during the limited time at the freshman's disposal.

On the following morning Reuben had as many visitors as could comfortably be packed in his apartment. The fact that an anonymous letter had been sent to the dean charging the freshman from Maine with having been concerned in the banner-raising, was sufficient to arouse the anger of nearly every student in the college.

All felt that if the missive had been written by some one connected with the institution, it was time such a

fellow should be pointed out and shunned; therefore even those who knew but little regarding the insult to the faculty were aroused.

These morning visits resulted in the calling of an indignation meeting, to be held at the gymnasium on the same evening, and a full attendance of the junior and freshman classes was requested.

Reuben did not succeed in gaining a private interview with Jack, as he wished, but managed to whisper to Sam:

"I believe Ben Gouge knows something about that letter."

"Gouge!" Sam repeated, in surprise. "Then I fancy we shall be able to connect the two."

"What do you mean?"

"I'll tell you later; but just now both Jack and I had better keep our mouths closed, for it's only a case of suspicion at present."

Reuben asked no further questions; but there was a decided belief in his heart that before being obliged to leave Yale he would at least have the satisfaction of knowing who had denounced him.

During this day nothing was said by any of the professors regarding the one subject upon which all thoughts were centered.

The majority of the students believed that, now it was known Reuben had formed one of the party, the efforts of the dean would be directed toward discovering who the freshman's companions were on that night.

The excitement regarding the affair had reached the

boiling point, and the indignation meeting was a success so far as numbers were concerned.

Hardly a member of the two classes, with the exception of Billy, was absent, and the first call after the meeting had been organized, was upon Jack and Sam for a report of what they had done.

The latter acted as spokesman, and, in reply to the summons, stated that while they believed they had a good clew upon which to work, it was not just to the suspected party to make public what had been learned.

The fact that the amateur detectives were making some progress, however slight, satisfied the audience, and the remainder of the evening was spent by those who were ambitious to speak in public in denouncing the author of the anonymous letter.

Reuben refused to say anything.

Several times he was called upon; but he explained that, under the peculiar circumstances, it would be better for him to remain silent, and the others respected his feelings in the matter.

It was no slight consolation, however, for him to hear the remarks made by his fellow-students, since it showed that he was looked upon with something akin to respect by all.

Neither Jack nor Sam went with the large party who visited the freshman's rooms at the conclusion of the meeting.

These two had decided to call upon Billy for the ostensible purpose of telling him what had been done, hoping, if he was indeed the guilty party, he would say some-

thing which might give them an idea of how to prove the truth of their suspicions.

In this they were disappointed.

Billy had had time to think over the slips made by his tongue during the previous visit, and was careful not to fall into the same mistake again.

He listened attentively to the account of the indignation meeting, making no comments; but his visitors fancied he looked troubled because of the interest displayed in the matter by all the students, irrespective of class.

"It seems pretty certain Reuben will have to go," Jack said, in conclusion, "and there's nothing we can do to help him; but it will be mighty warm for the fellow who wrote that letter."

"Do you think you can find him?" Billy asked, his face flushing.

"We won't give up trying, during this season at least, for it stands us in hand to find out who would do such a thing."

"Most likely he has taken precautions against discovery, and the secret will never be known unless he blows or himself, which isn't probable."

"If he didn't have any accomplices it will be a hard job; but in case some one assisted him, our chances are just so much the better," and then Jack went toward the door, for the chief purpose of the visit had proven a failure.

When his visitors had departed, Billy remained for

several moments buried in deep thought, and then, as if a happy thought had occurred to him, he wrote the following note:

DEAR BEN:—Come to my rooms as soon after receiving this as possible. I must see you at once. Yours,
BILLY.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REUBEN'S MISHAP.

The friends who had accompanied Reuben home from the indignation meeting did not leave him until a very late hour.

There were many things to be discussed, the two most important topics being the authorship of the anonymous letter and what answer should be returned to the question asked by the dean.

As to this last, the freshman from Maine was not particularly interested. After his confession it was not necessary for him to make any written answer, and what the others intended to do did not concern him.

He even refused to give much advice in the matter, replying to all such questions:

"I am through with this scrape, because I'm on the highway out of the college, consequently it would be foolish for me to have any voice in the discussion. I think every fellow should do what he thinks is right in the matter, and that will settle it."

"In such a case we should all be obliged to follow your footsteps, for it is the only course which can be right," said Roy, with a nervous laugh.

"Then why not do so?" Reuben asked. "It can't affect me in the slightest now, for I have sinned past all for-

givenness by not telling the dean what he asked; but it seems to me if every fellow owned up to the truth it would puzzle the faculty to know what punishment should be dealt out. They can't expel the whole class very well, and yet that is what must be done if you lie about the matter."

More than one of the party thought this advice sound, and at once all began discussing the question of following Reuben's example.

"I move that the majority rules in this case," Roy finally said. "All those who were at the banner-raising are now here, so suppose we take a vote on it."

"Second the motion!" Bolton cried, "and since we haven't gone through the formality of choosing a chairman, I'll put the question myself. All those who are in favor of following Reuben's advice will please move to the right-hand side of the room. Those who oppose it go to the left."

There was no necessity of counting noses, for every fellow present stepped to the right, and the vexed problem was finally settled.

A committee of three were appointed to draft a letter, for the sentiment of those about to confess was in favor of a stereotyped reply, and two were nominated to notify Sam and Jack of the action taken.

It was a relief to all when the matter was thus disposed of, and more than one predicted Reuben would necessarily be included in the punishment meted out to the remainder of the party; but he insisted on believing

himself and the one who assisted in hanging the banner would be forced to leave.

“That would really be the proper way out of it for the faculty. Although they can't well expel all of you, they can make the horrible example of those who really put the canvas in place. Then I have another sin to answer for, in refusing to tell the dean what he wanted to know.”

This view of the case seemed reasonable, and when the freshman's friends left him that night it was in the firm belief that he would not be a member of Yale College many days longer.

Reuben was unusually tired when he found himself alone. There had been so much to occupy his thoughts that it seemed as if he had been working hard many hours.

He thought it necessary, however, to read the letters received from home during the day once more.

To enjoy their contents to the utmost he got into bed, pulled the table with its student lamp near at hand, where he could see without difficulty, and gave himself up to the pleasure of perusing the missives.

The lines penned by Matilda naturally attracted the greater portion of his attention, and when he had read them for at least the sixth time his eyes closed in slumber.

How long he slept before being awakened, by a sense of suffocation and the crashing of woodwork, he was unable to tell; but events proved that it could not have been more than an hour.

The splintering of the door partially aroused him, and

on attempting to rise from the bed he found himself almost unable to move.

The room was filled with smoke, and in the corner nearest the window could be seen flames licking the casings.

He was dimly conscious that the lamp was yet burning; but as to that he could not afterward state positively.

The door was burst in, and Jack and Sam entered the room, the latter running to Reuben's assistance, while the former emptied the contents of the water pitcher on the flames.

Fragments of the panels had struck the table, overturning and extinguishing the lamp, and the rescuers were forced to work in the darkness after the flames were subdued in a measure.

"Get more water, quick!" Sam shouted, as he seized the pitcher and rushed downstairs.

"Help me pull Reuben out of this! He's about half-choked, and don't seem to have sense enough to care for himself!" Jack cried.

The draught of fresh air revived the young gentleman from Maine somewhat, and when Jack dragged him unceremoniously from the bed to the floor, allowing him to fall with a resounding thump, the resuscitation was complete.

By the time Reuben had been hauled into the hallway half-a-dozen of the nearest lodgers arrived at the scene of action, and the work of extinguishing the flames was carried forward with such good effect that when Reuben

knew what was passing on around him, there was nothing more dangerous in the apartment than smoke.

The gas had been lighted, and the extent of the damage was soon ascertained.

One window-casing and the curtain were completely destroyed, and several yards of carpet scorched to a cinder.

It was nothing serious, but would necessitate the freshman's changing his quarters for a while, until repairs could be made.

"How did it happen?" Jack asked, when Reuben finally arose to his feet, apparently in his right mind.

"I'm sure I don't know, unless the lamp set the curtain on fire while I was asleep."

"How could that be? Here are the fragments of the lamp close by the bed, and all the mischief was done on the other side of the room."

"I went to sleep while reading," and Reuben gathered his letters up hastily, lest his visitors should see that Matilda's was one of the missives which had caused him to be guilty of such indiscretion. "Perhaps the curtain blew over this way."

"It couldn't reach a quarter of the distance, no matter how high the wind was, and it so happens that the air is as calm as a clock."

"Then I give it up," Reuben replied, as he began to dress.

"So do I," one of his neighbors replied. "It's too cold to stand around here with nothing on but a nightshirt, and so long as you are safe there is no necessity for such

a foolish proceeding. If you want half of a bed come into my room."

The other scantily-clad visitors came to the same conclusion, and in a few moments Reuben was left alone with Jack and Sam.

"As soon as you are dressed we will go over to my quarters," the former said, "for you can't think of sleeping here to-night."

"I reckon I shall have to accept the invitation. There is so much glass broken here that it won't be a pleasant place in which to pass the night."

Nothing more was said until Reuben was walking across the campus with his two friends, and then he asked abruptly:

"How was it you fellows happened around just in the nick of time?"

"We had been downtown trying to learn something about the letter, and heard that all of us were to make a confession. Passing your shanty we saw a bright light, thought you must be awake, and concluded to call. When we reached the landing it didn't take long to understand the meaning of the illumination. You didn't answer when we thumped, so we broke the door in. Now the question is: What enemy have you who would set your room on fire?"

"Set it on fire? Why, it must have been the result of an accident," Reuben replied, astonished that his companion should have suggested such a possibility.

"I'd like to know what kind of an accident could send the fire to that spot?" Sam said, musingly. "It is certain

it couldn't have caught from the lamp, and there is no other way it might have started than by help from the outside."

"No one owes me a grudge, unless——"

Reuben stopped suddenly. He was about to mention Billy's name, but realized in time that it would be unjust even to hint he could have been capable of such a deed.

"I know what you were going to say," Jack added, "and it wouldn't surprise either Sam or I to know that the same fellow who sent the letter to the dean set the fire to-night."

"But I can't understand why he should do this last mischief," Reuben said, musingly. "He must know I am doomed, so far as Yale is concerned, and it could accomplish nothing to burn me out of a home."

"I may be wrong in my suspicions; but I'm going to investigate this matter early in the morning."

"What reasons have you for thinking he wrote the letter?"

"None, except his own actions. Now tell us why you said what you did in regard to Gouge."

Reuben repeated the conversation he had with the bruiser, concluding by saying:

"He is coming in the morning to give me an hour's practice with the gloves, and I am in hopes to get more out of him."

"We'll accidentally meet him downtown to-morrow night if you don't succeed, and see what we can do with him," Sam said, as he halted at the door of Jack's room.

"I'll see you in the morning, and until then it is best not to talk with any outsiders about this affair."

Reuben and Jack did not spend much time in conversation after entering the latter's quarters. It was past midnight, and, despite the exciting events of the past hour, both felt sadly in need of rest.

CHAPTER XXX.

REUBEN'S SENTENCE.

On the following morning Reuben followed Sam's advice relative to discussing the origin of the fire.

He was questioned by sympathizing friends; but to each he simply replied that he had no idea how the mishap could have occurred unless the lamp had started the flame in some way, and this was the generally accepted theory in the case.

Not until after breakfast did either he or Jack see Sam, and then that young gentleman was so very mysterious in his manner that Reuben did not feel at liberty to make any attempt at entering into conversation with him.

He called Jack aside, and after a long, whispered conversation, the two took their departure without intimating to any one their business.

"They think it will be possible to help me out of this scrape," Reuben said to himself as his friends walked rapidly away; "but the most that can be done now is to learn who wrote the letter, and if it did happen to be Billy Moore—— Nonsense! he wouldn't dare do such a thing, in the first place, for he got the scheme up, and it would be taking too big risks for him to meddle in the matter. The only source of information, according to my way of

thinking, is Ben Gouge, and I'll work him for all he's worth this morning."

Reuben's intentions were good, but, unfortunately, his execution was not sufficiently spirited to overcome the bruiser's reticence.

Gouge was at the gymnasium when Reuben arrived, but not in the best of spirits, if one could judge by the expression on his face.

"I hear you had a house warmin' up your way last night," he said, as the freshman entered.

"Yes, it was a trifle hot for a few minutes; but I came out of the scrape without any damage."

"Do you know how it started?"

Reuben looked at the speaker peculiarly for an instant, and then replied:

"It is pretty hard to tell about such things."

"Then you think some one set it on fire?"

"I didn't say so."

"But you looked it."

"I'm not responsible for my looks. Now tell me if you think some one tried to burn me out?"

"How should I know?"

"But you can form an opinion as well as I."

"I don't know how the thing happened."

Reuben gave a detailed account of the condition of the room at the time he went to sleep, and also when he was awakened, concluding by saying:

"Jack and Sam, who were the first to arrive, declare it couldn't have been an accident; but I wouldn't bother my head about it if I was positive who sent that letter to the

dean. If you know anything regarding it, it would pay you to tell me."

"I haven't got anything to tell; what made you think I had?"

"From a few words you let drop when I first spoke to you about it."

"Then you've made a big mistake," Gouge replied, in a sulky manner. "I'm here to give you practice with the gloves, an' expect to be paid for my time, so we'd better not waste it chinnin'."

"I am ready to pay the same as if we were thumping each other at the rate of two blows a second."

"But I want to earn my stuff reg'lar, so get the gloves on, an' we'll begin work."

It could readily be seen that Mr. Gouge did not intend to hold any further conversation, and, much against his inclination, Reuben began the practice.

He was not interested, however, owing to the disagreeable thoughts and speculations in his mind, and, noticing this, Mr. Gouge said, impatiently:

"See here, boss, you ain't in trim for this 'ere work, so I reckon we'd better call it off till to-morrow. I don't like to take a gent's money without earning it, an' that's what I'd be doin' if we kept on this way. You don't handle yer props any better than a baby could, an' I'll get out."

"Might as well make the hour up in some way," Reuben said, as he removed his gloves. "Sit down an' let's talk a bit."

"I haven't got the time; oughter be home now."

"But you came prepared to stay an hour."

"I wasn't so sure of it. I sha'n't charge anythin' for this baby play; but'll see you agin in the mornin'."

Mr. Gouge was about to beat a hasty retreat; but just at that moment Jack and Sam opened the door, thus preventing his exit.

"Hello, Ben," the latter cried, cheerily, "you're just the man I wanted to see! Going to be home this evening?"

"I reckon so."

"Then Jack and I are coming down for a set-to."

"Why not have it here?"

"Because we don't want any of the others to get on to it."

"You see, my place is mighty rough, an' there ain't the same kind of conveniences you gents are 'customed to."

"Nonsense! We shall do well enough, and it is the only place where we can be private."

"Very well; I'll have things fixed the best I can. Will you bring many friends?"

"Not a soul but our own two selves."

Mr. Gouge nodded benignly, for such private encounters always paid him very well, and Reuben asked as he left the building:

"What are you up to now?"

"A little scheme of our own. There's no need to ask whether you succeeded in learning anything from him, for it's easy to read defeat on every feature of your countenance."

"He wouldn't talk at all, and grew quite sulky when I tried to make him say something."

"I fancy we shall have better luck; but we won't talk about that now, because of more important news. All the Osborn Hall conspirators, including ourselves, sent in our confessions this morning, and now the freshman and junior classes are invited to meet the dean at four o'clock. The mine is about to be exploded."

"Well, I'm not where I shall be hurt by it, so I've no especial interest in the matter."

"I'm not so certain of that. Jack and I just came from your room, where we found this note. I fancy it is an invitation to be present at the ceremonies."

Reuben listlessly opened the envelope handed him by Sam.

The latter was correct in his surmises. The freshman had been bidden to join his class on this occasion.

"It's my last appearance as a member of the college," Reuben said, with a faint smile, as he handed the missive to Sam. "I shall receive my walking papers before the dean finishes with you fellows."

"I don't think so. Of course, we'll all get it pretty tough; but you can't have a worse dose than the rest of us."

"We shall see," and subsequent events showed that the freshman was correct in his surmises.

Nothing of importance occurred from this time until the students assembled in response to the summons.

Each of those particularly interested in the Osborn Hall

affair had so much which was disagreeable to think of, that for the time being Reuben's position was forgotten.

The freshman from Maine was among the last to enter the hall where the dean was to address them, and a few moments after his arrival what Jack called the "performance" began.

All the professors were present, and when the murmur of conversation ceased the dean commenced proceedings by detailing what had been done, even going so far into the particulars as to quote the objectionable inscription on the banner.

"I am pained to learn that so many of the young gentlemen were concerned in the disgraceful proceedings," he said; "but some of the sting is removed by your voluntary avowal of guilt. All the wrongdoers, so far as I know, with the exception of one, have acknowledged their misdeeds. I now wish the confession to extend further, and call upon each in turn to state whether or no he aided Mr. Green in putting the banner in place. We will begin with you, Mr. Bolton. Did you assist Mr. Green?"

"No, sir," was the prompt response.

Each in turn was asked the same question, and, as a matter of course, each replied in the negative.

The dean looked perplexed.

Then he called the names of both classes, and a response was made to all save Billy's.

"Mr. Moore is the only absentee, and he is on sick leave," the dean said, half to himself. Then addressing the students, he continued: "It is positive Mr. Green did not do this work unaided, more particularly since he is a

stranger, and the method of entering Osborn Hall must have been pointed out to him. I term even that assistance, and again ask if any one present aided him?"

There was no reply, and the dean held a short, whispered conversation with Professor Studious, while the young gentlemen gazed at each other as if asking why the faculty could be so thick-headed as not to think Billy Moore might be the culprit they were in search of.

"I regret that it is not possible to have a full confession, now that this matter has gone so far," the dean finally said. "It was to be hoped the particulars asked for would have been given without hesitation; but since those who are equally guilty with Mr. Green refuse to speak, he must suffer alone. I assure you, however, that everything will be done to discover his associates in the actual work of suspending the banner. This is a case which calls for the most severe punishment, and yet in view of the fact that all save Mr. Green made voluntary confession, I shall put you on your honor not to leave the college grounds under any pretext during the next four weeks."

The "young gentlemen" looked at each other in astonishment.

The punishment was so light in comparison to what had been expected that they were overjoyed, and mentally congratulated themselves for having followed Reuben's advice.

"In the case of Mr. Green," the dean continued, "it is the opinion of all the faculty that he should be expelled.

He alone did not confess until the truth was known, and stands self-convicted of having been one of the ring-leaders in the disgraceful proceedings. He is, therefore, no longer a member of this institution, and will be allowed forty-eight hours in which to make his preparations for leaving."

CHAPTER XXXI.

REUBEN'S HOPES.

When sentence had been pronounced against him, Reuben believed he was no longer required to remain in the hall, and, with a low bow to the faculty and the students, went toward the door.

"Mr. Green, the young gentlemen have not yet been dismissed," the dean said, sternly.

"Very true, sir; but since I am no longer a member of this college, it hardly seems proper for me to remain here. Besides, forty-eight hours is such a short time in which to communicate with my father and depart from the city, that I am forced to take advantage of every moment."

The argument in favor of his leaving the building was unanswerable, and the dean said, in a more friendly tone:

"It is not our purpose to limit you as to time, Mr. Green. The number of hours may have been set unadvisedly. The idea I intended to convey was that you must go as soon as practicable."

"I do not think it will be necessary to remain over the number of hours allowed," Reuben replied, and then, with considerably more dignity than his friends had thought it possible for him to assume, he left the hall.

Half-an-hour later his companions in the mischief

which had been attended with such disastrous results, found him sitting alone in his room, and each one had some word of sympathy for the freshman, who, although green, had proved himself to be a right good fellow.

To Reuben's surprise, Jack and Sam were not among the visitors, and this caused no little surprise, for he had counted on their being the first to assure him of their sympathy.

There was a very good reason for their absence.

On coming from the painful interview with the dean they had seen Ben Gouge going into Billy's quarters, and Sam said in a whisper, lest he should be overheard by the students who were near at hand:

"I believe we've got one chance of helping Reuben, and it may be the last, because he is obliged to go away so suddenly."

"Do you mean that we had better tackle Gouge here, instead of waiting for the evening?"

"No, we'll simply call on Billy while he is there, and it's just possible that if they were both concerned in the transactions some clew may be dropped by one or the other during the course of the conversation."

"Come on quickly, so we can be in at the beginning of their interview," and Jack started at a rapid pace toward Moore's quarters.

Billy's apartments were on the second story, and, without especially intending to do so, the visitors ascended the stairs softly.

On reaching the landing it was possible to hear the

sound of loud and angry conversation, and Jack whispered:

“Under the circumstances I think we will be warranted in listening.”

That Sam was of the same idea could be seen by the fact that he at once bent his head toward the keyhole, and Jack followed his example.

The words of the conversation could be distinguished. Gouge was speaking in an angry tone.

“If I had believed you were up to another dirty trick it would have been a long day before you'd persuaded me to help you out with it.”

“How do you know that letter had anything to do with the chump from Maine?” Billy asked, with a snarl.

“Because I'm not sich a fool that I can't put two an' two together. In less'n an hour after Tom Walker went to the boss, Green was called to the dock, an' a letter flashed up, which read as if it was sent by somebody in the town. That's proof enough for me, an' I reckon it would satisfy most anybody if I should give the snap away.”

“Well, supposing I did send it, what business is that of yours?”

“A good deal, seein' as how I'm mixed up in it. I may be tough, Billy Moore; but there's no man as can say I ever did a sneakin' trick like that jest because I couldn't get the best of a feller in proper style.”

“I don't care to hear anything more about it, and you'll oblige me by going back to your hole.”

“I may possibly hang around the college a spell before

I go, an' then I reckon Reuben Green won't be the only one to leave this 'ere institoot."

Before Billy could reply, Sam had opened the door without the formality of knocking, and, followed closely by Jack, entered the room.

"What do you want here?" Billy cried, angrily.

"We're on business, and that's why we came in without first asking permission," Sam replied, sternly. "We have heard a portion of the conversation between you and Ben, so——"

"Been playing the sneak by listening at my door, have you?" Billy cried, starting up from his chair in a rage.

"It doesn't sound very well to hear you call any one a sneak, after the dirty tricks that you have been playing; but yet I'm willing to confess it wasn't a gentlemanly thing to do. It would have been different if we had been dealing with a gentleman."

"Do you mean that for me?" and now Billy was literally pale with rage.

"I do, most decidedly; but there is no reason why you should get in a temper about it, for there will be better cause before we leave. Jack and I were appointed by the two lower classes to discover the author of the anonymous letter, and we have just succeeded in our work."

"Prove that it was me if you can!"

"That is exactly what we propose to do," Sam replied, and then, turning to Gouge, he gave a detailed account of what the dean had done, concluding by saying: "Reuben has been expelled, while the rest of us are let off with very light discipline. Now, you can help us prove what

may be of great service to him, and I ask that you come out like a man with what you know."

"If you open your mouth to either of those fellows you shall never receive another dollar from me!" Billy screamed.

"I don't want money bad enough to earn it in the same way I have from you. Mr. Hovey, I'll give you the plain facts in the case, and you may piece them together. It's straight enough to my mind, and a gentleman like you oughter make a good deal more out of it than I can."

Then Gouge, despite Billy's angry protestations, explained fully the innocent part he had played in the matter, and expressed his willingness to repeat the story to the dean.

In the minds of Sam and Jack this was sufficient to connect Billy with the mean business beyond the shadow of a doubt, and the former said to the now thoroughly enraged fellow:

"It's no use for you to froth at the mouth, Billy, for the jig is up. The proper thing is to make an honest confession to the dean. Tell him you were the leader in the mischief, and that you afterward so far forgot yourself as to try to make Reuben suffer alone."

"Do you take me for a fool?"

"I didn't until you forged that letter from his girl, and then I thought there must be a screw loose somewhere."

"I'll get even with you for this. Because I'm bunged up you think it is safe to say anything."

"If you were as sound as a dollar I shouldn't be afraid

to speak my mind freely, Billy, for you never could hurt any one, except in the way you've injured Reuben."

Billy's face was crimson with rage, and it seemed impossible for him to speak.

He stammered and choked a moment without uttering any intelligible sound, and after waiting some time, Sam continued:

"There is one of two things which will be done before midnight. You must write to the dean as I have said, or Gouge, Jack and I will tell him the entire story, giving also the reasons why Reuben did not make a voluntary confession. You knew he was bound by a solemn promise, and counted on his being expelled because his mouth was closed. Now, choose quick, for this is to be done without loss of time."

"You'll stick your nose in other people's business once too often some of these fine days, Sam Hovey!"

"That isn't answering my question as to which you prefer shall be done."

"I'll square things with you before long!"

"See here, Billy, the less you talk like that the better it will be all around. I am ready to answer at any moment for what I'm doing now, but sha'n't allow you to waste time."

"I want you fellows to leave my room, and go quick!" Billy screamed.

"Very well; you know where we shall go, and five minutes from now it will be too late for you to make any effort at undoing the mischief."

"I tell you to get out of here!"

Mr. Gouge pulled up the sleeves of his coat as if on the point of polishing the angry fellow off in proper style; but Jack motioned for him to obey the order.

"You wouldn't gain anything by whipping him, and it might interfere with our plans. Pay no attention to what he says."

"But I don't feel like standin' still while a little shrimp like him gives us so much guff."

"Anything is better than a row just now. Come with me."

Mr. Gouge allowed himself to be led out of the room, and Sam waited only long enough to say:

"Your wisest course is to do as I have advised, Billy, and make a clean breast of the whole affair."

The practical joker was now literally beside himself with rage, and catching up an armful of books from the table, he hurled one after another at the fellow who would have done him a good turn.

"It's a waste of breath to talk with that fellow," Jack said, as his friend joined him. "If he's willing to have us tell the story rather than make the explanation himself, it can't be helped. Where are we going now?"

"To Reuben's rooms. I fancy we shall find a lot of the fellows there, and I want Roy and a couple of others to go with us to the dean."

Sam was correct in his surmise as to where his friends could be found, and without loss of time he asked that they accompany him.

"What's up?" Reuben asked, in surprise.

"I'll tell you everything when we get back; but this

much you shall know now: We have found out who sent the anonymous letter, and there's every reason for you to hope there will be no necessity of going to Aurora before the holidays."

"What do you mean?" Reuben cried, excitedly.

"We'll tell you later," Sam replied, laughingly, hurrying from the room with the companions he had selected.

CHAPTER XXXII.

REUBEN'S REPRIEVE.

It can readily be fancied that Reuben and his friends awaited with the liveliest impatience the return of Sam and his party.

They could have no idea of what he and Jack hoped to accomplish by visiting the dean after sentence had been pronounced; but it was evident to all that the amateur detectives believed it would be possible to effect something.

Not until fully an hour had passed did the party return, and then Mr. Gouge was conspicuous by his absence.

"We had no further use for Ben, so sent him home," Jack explained.

"Did he know anything about the anonymous letter?" Reuben asked, anxiously.

"Through him we were able to prove a good deal inferentially," Sam replied, "and now if you fellows feel disposed to listen to a long yarn, Jack and I will give a detailed account of our stewardship."

"Go ahead," one of the party said, laughingly, "and don't spare words for the sake of getting through soon, for we want every particular."

"Very well, I'll give you the story up to the time we

called in here, and then Jack shall tell what was said at the interview with the dean."

Then Sam repeated what had been heard at the door of Billy's room, and the ensuing conversation, after which Jack took up the narrative.

"We concluded," he said, "that it was time to give the whole snap away, and came here for more fellows to substantiate the story. His highness was in a mighty bad humor when we were ushered into his august presence, and flatly said he didn't care to hear anything unless we were willing to give the fullest particulars.

"Sam told him that was exactly why we had come, and began with incidents previous to the banner-raising, showing how Reuben was dragged into it instead of being one of the ringleaders.

"Then we explained how eager Reuben was to admit his guilt at the first, and why it was impossible for him to do so. That stirred the old fellow up a bit, and he wanted to know why the matter had not been explained to him before sentence was pronounced. Sam explained that we did not feel at liberty to do so since Billy had not answered the circular letter——"

"Did you tell him that Billy was in the scrape?" Reuben interrupted.

"Of course we did. Knowing what that little sneak had done, no one thought it necessary to hold anything back. After fully explaining that part of it, we began about the letter; told what we had heard, and brought the Honorable Benjamin Gouge forward to give his ver-

sion of the affair. He did his part like a man, and our work was done."

"What did the dean say?" some one asked.

"He hemmed and hawed for a while, asked a lot of questions, with the result that we told him about Billy's forging a letter purporting to come from Reuben's girl, and it set the old man into a rage. For as much as five minutes he sat like a bump on a log, never speaking, and then he said he would thank us to summon the students to the same meeting-place, half-an-hour before recitations in the morning, so we've got to run around pretty lively for a while, for he wants all hands to be present."

"What do you suppose he intends to do?" Reuben then asked, curiously.

"I reckon it will turn out to your advantage, so there's no need speculating about it, more especially since we shall know the whole story in a few hours. We have to go now to tell the fellows that another lecture is to come off in the morning, and it isn't likely we shall be back to-night. Keep your upper lip stiff, old man," he added to Reuben, "and I'll bet a dollar against one of your Matilda's doughnuts that you'll get a reprieve."

The freshman's visitors left him shortly after Jack and Sam departed, and it is safe to say the young gentleman from Maine slept very little that night.

If he could at this late hour escape the disgrace of being sent home it seemed to him he would ask for nothing more, and the very excess of joy prevented his eyelids from closing in slumber.

Before he was out of bed next day a note, couched in the most polite language, was brought him from the dean, requesting, as a favor, that he would attend a meeting that morning, with the other students.

"It sounds well to have him write 'other students,'" Reuben said to himself, as he read the missive for the second time. "That doesn't look as if I was to get away in twenty-four hours."

Every fellow connected with the college, with the single exception of Billy Moore, was in the hall, eagerly awaiting developments when the faculty entered, and were not kept long in suspense.

The dean opened the meeting abruptly by saying:

"Thanks to your love for fair play, young gentlemen, we at last know the truth regarding the affair at Osborn Hall. I now wish to retract something which I said last night. Under a plain statement of facts, Mr. Green's course is presented in an entirely different light. I understand it was his wish to make a confession when you first were spoken to by me regarding the disgraceful work; but he was prevented by force, and obliged to promise he would remain silent.

"Therefore, young gentlemen, instead of expelling Mr. Green, as was announced yesterday, the faculty have decided he is no more culpable than any of those before me, and that his punishment will be the same as yours. I sent for the originator of the mischief at an early hour this morning; but learn that he went away during the night, taking his baggage with him. Mr. William Moore is publicly expelled from this college in disgrace, and it

will be more conducive to the happiness of all if he does not return to ask for explanations."

The dean concluded his remarks by warning the students against practical jokes so-called, which was but another term oftentimes for brutality, and hoped there would be no more disagreeable feelings between the faculty and the "young gentlemen."

* * * * *

It is not necessary to give a detailed account of the feast of rejoicing which followed his reprieve.

Members of the senior class, who were not forbidden to leave the college grounds, kindly offered to give the necessary orders at Denny's restaurant, and such a supper was sent by him as will be remembered many years by those who helped devour it.

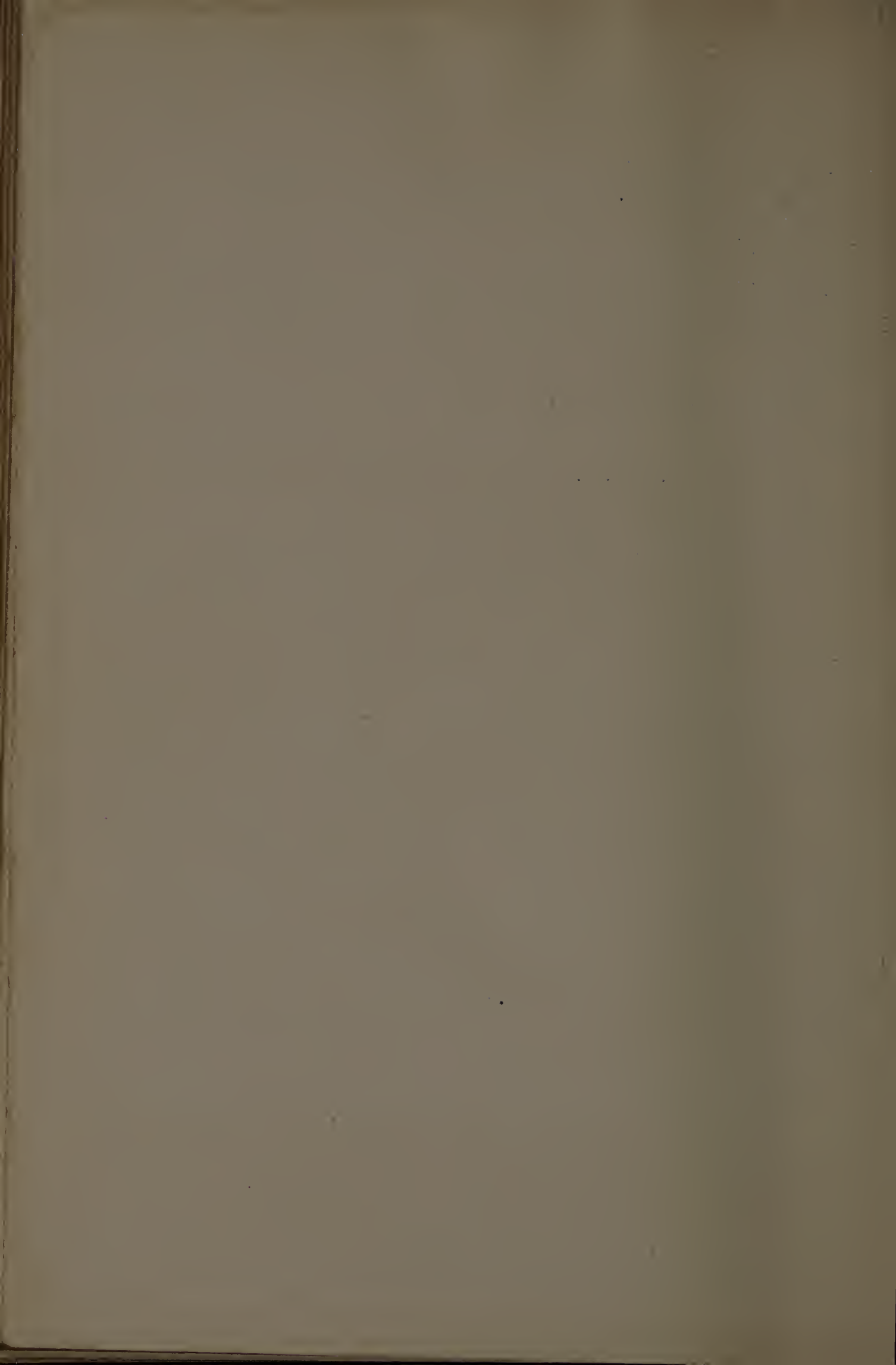
And Reuben was the lion of the evening.

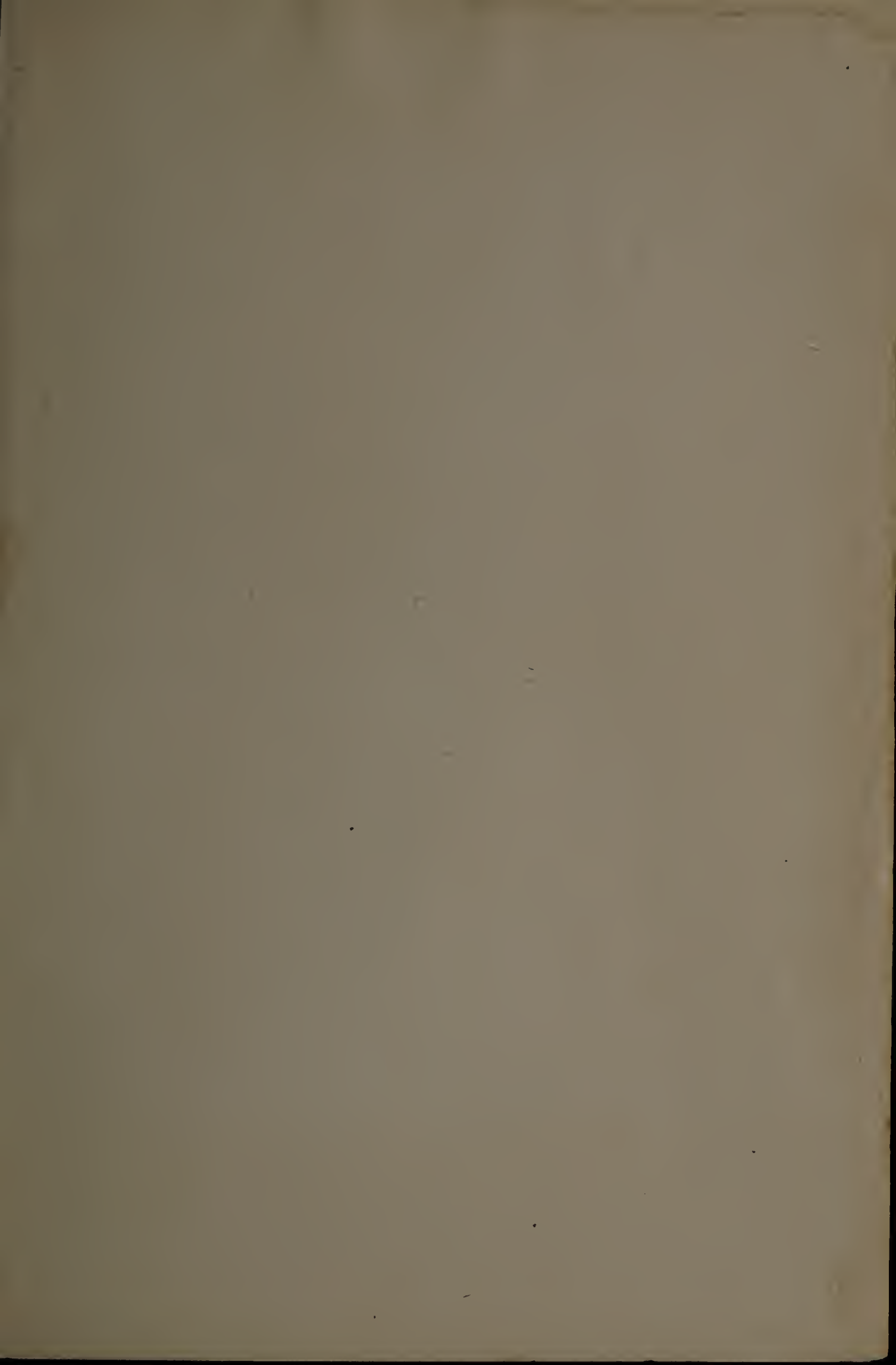
He was called upon for speech after speech, until he absolutely could say no more, but promised to show his gratitude by introducing each and every one to Matilda on Commencement Day, if not before.

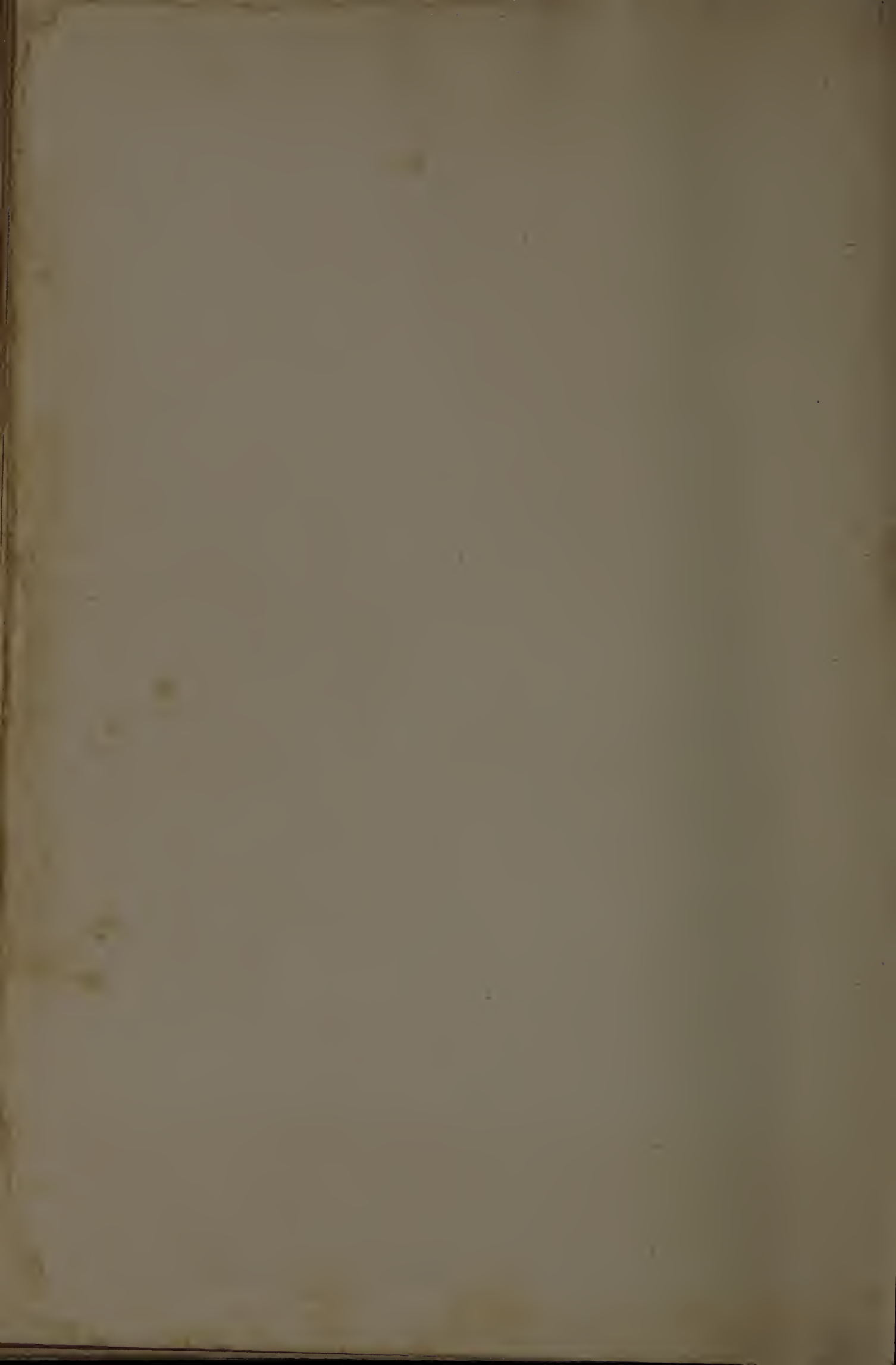
Although his name still remained Green, he had rubbed off a great deal of the greenness of his nature, and there was not a fellow in either of the classes who did not feel a certain sense of pride in numbering Reuben among his list of friends.

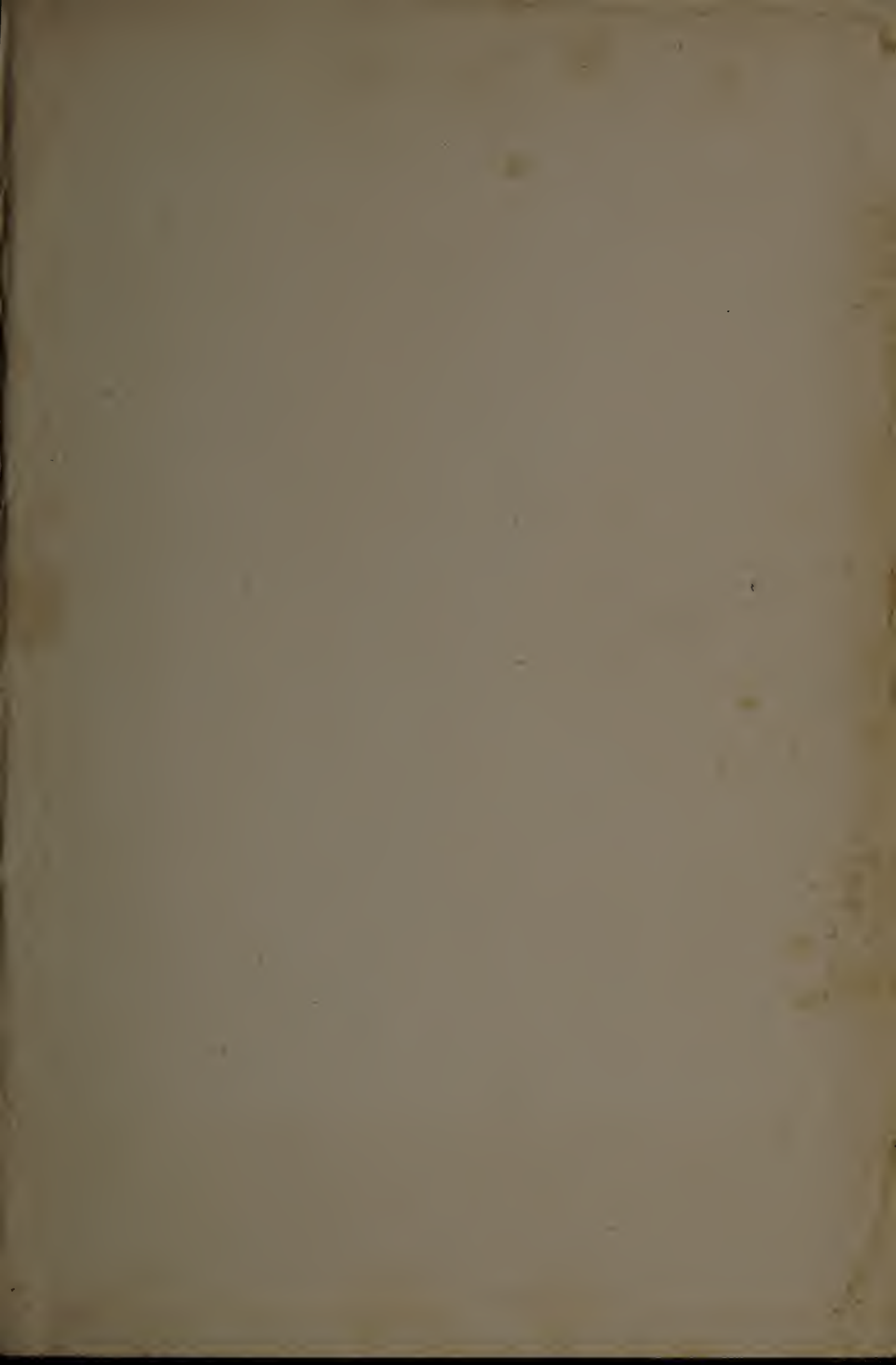
Under such pleasant circumstances, and with the assurance that never again was Reuben made the butt of college jokes, we can well afford to bid him good-by.

THE END.

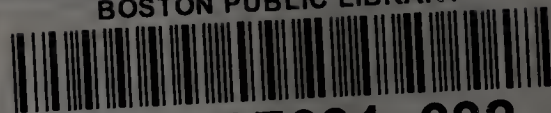








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